

COACH AND BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 82 SEPTEMBER 11 1993



**IS EXTENDED VEHICLE
LIFE WORTH WHILE?
Putting the Fylde
rebuild to the test**



OFT TO PROBE FIFE SCOTTISH

Competition on subsidised routes sparks a complaint.....Page 5

MERSEYBUS STAFF SHARE THEIR JOY

Free MTL Trust Holdings shares now valued at 80p.....Page 7



PLAXTON BACK IN THE BLACK

£0.44 million half-year profit after £1 million loss in 1992.....Page 14

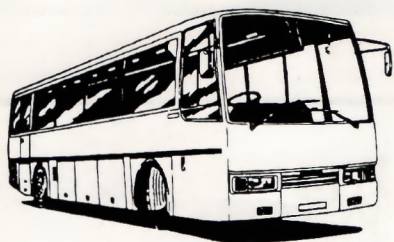
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1986 BEDFORD YNV DUPLER LASER II 12M, 49 recliners, grey moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, power entrance door, wired TV/video, white/duo red.

M.O.T. MARCH 1994

1983 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 51 recliners, brown/beige/orange, moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, water boiler, side window blinds, TELMA retarder, Webasto heating, carpet to gangway, finished metallic silver/black/red.

M.O.T. MARCH 1994

1980 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLER DOMINANT II 12M, 57 seats in Autumn tint moquette, power entrance door, finished white/yellow.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1990 (September) DENNIS JAVELIN DUPLER 320 11M, 55 seats, grey/yellow/orange moquette, power operated entrance door, air suspension, white.

M.O.T. JUNE 1994

1990 DENNIS JAVELIN DUPLER 320 8.5M, 37 seats, beige/orange moquette, curtains, power entrance door, finished white/beige/rose.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1994

1983 VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P90 TWIN DECK, 58 seats (49 upper saloon + 9 lower saloon), beige/orange moquette, toilet, water boiler, wired colour monitors/video, white.

M.O.T. APRIL 1994

1984 VOLVO B10M GLE PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49 recliners, duo red/grey moquette, O/S rear sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, coolbox, water boiler, Webasto heating, centre gangway carpet, TELMA retarder, AIR CONDITIONING, autolube, splitter gearbox, finished cream/crimson.

M.O.T. MARCH 1994

1984 DAF SB2300 JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P50 12M, 49 recliners, brown/beige/red moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, continental door, driver's berth, water boiler, finished all white.

M.O.T. JULY 1994

1986 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 49 recliners, beige/brown moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, aircraft style lockers to hatracks, water boiler, power operated entrance door, wired colour monitor/video, finished yellow/white/black.

M.O.T. 1994

1984 DAF DHTD PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 E-type seats, brown/red/orange moquette, curtains, power entrance door, finished white/beige/rose

M.O.T. APRIL 1994

1987 (August) IVECO DAILY WHITTAKER, 14 high-backed coach seats, red/grey moquette, finished white/crimson.

M.O.T. MAY 1994

1990 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M, 51 seats (46 reclining + 5-way fixed at rear), grey/red moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, coolbox, water boiler, wired TV/video, finished all white.

M.O.T. DECEMBER 1993

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COACH AND BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 82 SEPTEMBER 11 1993

THE political season is upon us, party conferences are just a month away and politicians revived by their long summer recess have reassessed priorities on the political agenda. But where stands public transport in general and coach and bus travel in particular?

There's a flurry of renewed political activity with ministers, fired by media interest, fighting the early rounds in their struggle to retain power and progress careers. But what is the virtue in creatively promoting coaches and buses?

Minister for roads, Robert Key, was one of the first off the starting blocks as proposed radical curbs on urban car use threaten to contradict his declared support for the car and the Department of Transport's £24 billion road-building programme.

Environmentalists pressing for greener transport policies have forced a significant shift in the debate over car use. Have we got the green shoots of a policy which favours coach and bus?

Before we get carried away let us not forget a

'Like the Bus & Coach Council we believe the case for VAT on fares is fundamentally flawed. We rejoiced when the last Budget granted a reprieve, but do not pretend that this thorny issue is off the agenda. Government needs to raise income and there are far more contentious VAT issues!'

second contradiction lurking in the background. How can you reconcile a pro-public transport green policy with the imposition of VAT on the very thing you are trying to promote?

Like the Bus & Coach Council we believe the case for VAT on fares is fundamentally flawed. We rejoiced when the last Budget granted a reprieve, but do not pretend that this thorny issue is off the agenda. Government needs to raise income and there are far more contentious VAT issues!

Ministers and MPs are in receptive mood at the moment so the message is very clear. Bend their ears now. There is no excuse for delaying the lobby and the coach and bus industry must fight its own corner. If we fail, we may jeopardise our credibility as a force to be taken seriously.

The signs of an environmentally-led recovery in the industry's fortunes are encouraging, but public transport is not yet high enough on the political agenda. The BCC's fact sheet on VAT and fares is excellent. It puts the case in a compelling and factual way. However, success with the campaign needs wide support.

Don't forget that politicians have a short time to make it to the top (and they need your support to get there), whereas public transport needs their support for a long-term future.

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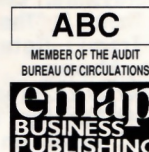
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COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING 11 SEPTEMBER 1993

■ **Leicestershire independent Kinch Buses** of Loughborough is launching its first commercial country bus services next month. Page 6

■ **Employee shareholders** of Merseybus parent MTL Trust Holdings have been given encouraging forecasts for the future with the announcement that their stake of at least 250 free shares each is being valued at 80p per share. Page 7

■ **Coach and bus registrations** during August confirmed the upward trend throughout the year with a 12.5 per cent rise which brings the average increase for the year to 6.4 per cent. Page 8.

■ **Harrogate District Council** has voted to get tough with developers Ladbroke City and County Land and use compulsory purchase powers to take over the town's derelict bus station. Page 10

■ **Citybus of Hong Kong** has won the tender to operate 28 routes in the colony after 60 years of exclusive franchise to China Motor Bus. Page 11

■ **First results** from the 1991 London Area Transport Survey (LATS) show a rise in car use and decline in bus travel from the previous survey in 1981. Page 12

■ **Henlys, the Plaxton parent**, has announced a £3.2 million profit for the half-year ending June 1993. Page 14

COACH AND BUS EVENTS

- September 23: Buses Worldwide meeting including talk on recent BWW visit to Poland. Fred Tallant Hall (Room J) 153 Drummond Street, London NW1, 7pm. Details from Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants, GU13 9HE.
- September 26: SHOWBUS, Imperial War Museum, Duxford. Trade inquiries ONLY to Charles Nicholson, Showbus, The Apothecaries Lodges, off Collinswood Road, Farnham Common, Bucks
- September 28: EPIP '93. Third Annual Loughborough Seminar on Electronic Public Information, Loughborough University. Details from G Sargent, tel 0509 223075.
- September 28: Omnibus Society meeting. "Through the 90s with M&D", Roger Davies, Maidstone & District director of operations. Details from Barry Le Jeune on 071 918 3295.
- September 30: Industrial Society Conference, Peter Runge House. Speakers include Rod Wilson of Reading Buses. Details from Sue Dadswell on 071 839 4300.
- October 7-10: Coach & Bus '93, Hall 5, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. Philip Carlisle, BCC, tel 071 831 7546, fax 071 242 0053
- October 15-20: European Coach and Bus Fair, Kortrijk, Belgium, tel 010 32 51 22 60 60
- November 6: Second National Road Transport History Symposium, National Tramway Museum, Crich, near Matlock, Derbyshire. Conference chairman is Professor John Hibbs. Theme is "The Crown of the Road, the Rise and Fall of the Tram". Details from Rosie Thacker at National Tramway Museum.
- October 27-28: Greater Manchester - The Scene of Public Transport Activity. National conference at Manchester Town Hall. Details on 061 242 6241.

Safety sensors on dual-door MCW Metrobuses are being removed by some operators presenting a danger to passengers, claims the Transport and General Workers Union



■ BUS

Dual-door danger claim

SAFETY sensors on dual-door MCW Metrobuses are being removed by some operators and presenting a danger to passengers, claims the Transport and General Workers Union.

Automatic retract systems prevent rear exit doors from closing if a passenger's clothing is caught while getting off the vehicle.

All new buses are required by law to have the devices fitted but a loophole, which the Department of Transport wants to close, allows older vehicles to operate without retract systems.

TGWU district officer Ken Fuller said: "I wrote to the traffic commissioner to ask if these features were governed by legal

requirements and to London Transport to ask if they were subject to the specifications of LT contracts.

"Passengers should be aware that these dangers exist and take the necessary precautions," Mr Fuller added.

However, London Transport is fitting new devices to old vehicles and all manufacturers now offer the safety system. They cost between £200 and £500 to fit depending on the type of vehicle.

LT group engineer Simon Brown said: "There is no truth that we are taking them off and we are presently taking off the rubber nosing on doors and fitting a new system which is to become compulsory on all vehicles."

■ COACH AND BUS

O-Licence fees change planned

CHANGES to the O-licence fee structure have been proposed by the Department of Transport. The proposals follow Government policy that fees should cover the full cost of processing licence applications and enforcement activity, including vehicle and driver checks by Vehicle Inspectorate staff and the cost of Traffic Commissioners' investigations and public inquiries.

Most elements of the DoT's new structure could be adapted to the present five-yearly licensing system, but it could also fit in with continuous licensing as proposed in the Department's

By Mike Morgan

consultation document issued on May 27.

The proposed fee structure is:

- A non-refundable application charge to be payable by all applicants
- A further "grant" charge would then be payable when, and if, a licence was actually granted. This would be partly refundable if a licence was given up within a certain period of its grant
- A vehicle fee payable with the first instalment at the time that the licence is granted. This may be combined with the "grant"

charge and would be based on the number of vehicles in use and would cover average enforcement costs. The intervals for this charge would depend on responses to the consultation;

- A separate charge for processing an application for major variations to the licence would continue to be made, but there would continue to be no separate charge for minor changes such as change of vehicles or increase in number of vehicles in use

- Refunds would be subject to an administrative charge.

The department wants comments on the proposals by Monday October 11.

■ BUS

Fife Scottish to face OFT probe

■ COACH AND BUS

Derby goes for growth

EMPLOYEE-owned Derby City Transport has secured a £1.5 million development capital investment from NatWest Ventures' midlands office to fund further growth.

NatWest Ventures provided the £1.5 million equity financing, in conjunction with a restructuring of banking facilities by National Westminster Bank in Nottingham.

KPMG Peat Marwick acted as advisers to the management team.

DCT's managing director, Bob Hind said: "We look forward to a long association with NatWest Ventures in our quest to further improve the company's financial performance and rate of growth."

Adrian Willetts of NatWest Ventures said: "We were impressed by the management team at Derby City Transport."

"Furthermore, we believe that investment in this sector may provide exciting opportunities in the future."

STAGECOACH subsidiary Fife Scottish Omnibuses faces an Office of Fair Trading investigation under the Competition Act 1980.

The investigation follows a complaint from local bus operator Moffat & Williamson that Fife Scottish registered commercial services on 11 of its Fife Region subsidised routes, and it was running uneconomic services on them for the predatory purpose of preventing competition.

Inquiries by the OFT will establish whether or not Fife Scottish's conduct is anti-competitive; that is, whether it restricts, distorts or prevents competition on the subsidies routes affected. Last month, Fife

By Richard Simpson

Scottish was warned that its conduct against another operator, Orion, had not been "responsible" after a Fife Scottish service was withdrawn once Orion had abandoned a route (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 21).

James Howitt, the accountant at Moffat & Williamson, said he was "very pleased" with news of the inquiry.

"As soon as we started running the routes, Fife Scottish started running alongside us," he said.

"There was no way they could make money out of it, but it didn't hit us as hard as they thought."

"We complained to the



Fife Scottish competing unfairly - claim

OFT - we'd complained about other things before but this is the first time they have taken any notice of it.

"Our complaint has been with the Office of Fair Trading for over a year. When Sir Bryan Carsberg took over as director general of the OFT we reminded him that this matter was still outstanding and it looks as if he's decided to do something about it."

No comment was forth-

coming from Stagecoach before *Coach and Bus Week* went to press.

■ The acquisition of Welcome Passenger Services by Busways Travel Services (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 14) has been cleared by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the recommendation of the director general of fair trading without referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

...and Your Bus lodges complaint

DARLINGTON newcomer Your Bus, which launched its new minibus network at the end of May, has lodged complaints against incumbent operator United Automobile with the Office of Fair Trading.

Allegations that United's competition is unfair, predatory and designed to thwart the entry of the newcomer, which is having to compete against levels of service which are double those prior to the start of the conflict.

Your Bus managing director Andrew Guest said competition was intense although it had not made him regret his original decision to start up services. "I believe that it is United's intention to put us out of business, and they have stated publicly, on more than one occasion that their increased network is losing money," he said.

The Westcourt Group, United's parent, has already escaped the threat of divestment after the Monopolies and

Mergers Commission investigation into Trimdon Motor Services.

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Michael Heseltine said in June that the director general of fair trading was to seek undertakings from Westcourt to improve its local accountability, to pre-notify further acquisitions, and to restrict its ability to use fares and frequency of service in a predatory way against new competitors (*Coach and Bus Week*, June 12).



"IT'S AMAZING WHAT SOME PEOPLE WILL DO TO INCREASE THEIR MARKET SHARE..."

■ BUS

Bournemouth Yellow Buses gets Buzzcard

MUNICIPAL Bournemouth Transport has launched a new smart card ticket for use on its Yellow Buses.

The Buzzcard features state-of-the-art technology developed by Wayfarer Transit Systems for use in conjunction with its Wayfarer 3 system.

The electronic smart cards speed up passenger flows and provide Bournemouth Transport with an unparalleled level of management information.

A multi-media advertising campaign through Bournemouth agency Cammeh Thurston included local press slots, leaflet

drops and Bournemouth Transport managing director Ted Reid - who appears on local radio commercials doing an impression of Arthur Askey singing The Buzzy Bee Song.

Mr Reid is no stranger to performing. He has appeared on many stages acting, singing and conjuring as an amateur and semi-professional.

Mr Reid said: "I don't get time for this sort of thing these days. But I was always a great fan of Arthur Askey, and it seemed an obvious song to choose to launch the new Buzzcard scheme."

CBW

■ A FLOATING workshop organised by Olau-Line is to take place on November 3. The third annual Euroshop is aimed at operators and takes place on the Olau Hollandia Sheerness to Vlissingen ferry. Over 50 top ranking exhibitors from Britain and the Continent will be there to represent major hotels, tourist offices and attractions and give expert advice to operators. Director of Independent Coach Travel Simon Weeks said: "I attended last year's event and found it an invaluable source of information, inspirational as well as informative."

■ SOUTHAMPTON based Solent Blue Line staff have spent their day off transferring casualties from Eastleigh Hospital following a plane crash involving a chemical tanker and a passenger train. Fortunately it was a mock disaster organised by Hampshire emergency services and the firm was called upon to help out. Solent Blue Line's Eastleigh manager Steve Kesley said: "We had to call in drivers and inspectors to respond to the incident and there was first class support. We would like to think Solent Blue would be on hand if a major disaster ever took place."

■ LEADING automotive electronics company Econocruise has secured a £35 million order fitting speed limiters to Volvo and Scania's European distribution centres. The Rugby-based company which now supplies 75 per cent of the UK market has the BS5750 quality standard and has doubled its workforce in the past three years. Econocruise sales and marketing director Roger Hamilton said: "We have been supplying both companies for some time and built up a strong trading relationship. The decision to select us as their sole supplier reflects the confidence they have in our company."

■ SATISFACTION with Victoria coach station has reached an all-time high following a £4 million refurbishment programme. A recent survey revealed that 90 per cent of passengers were pleased with security and safety and over 85 per cent thought information access and cleanliness had improved. The number of vehicles departing from the station has risen for the first time since 1984.

■ BUS

Kinch prepares for rural bus launch ...

By Andrew Jarosz

LEICESTERSHIRE independent Kinch Buses of Loughborough is launching its first commercial country bus services next month.

Preliminary notice has been given to passengers as Kinch uprates its Leicester outer circle service this month, with a new routing and some new buses.

Kinch and Midland Fox have operated the outer circle service with a subsidy for three years.

It links the Leicester General hospital with outlying districts such as Wigston, Beaumont Leys and Braunstone.

From this month, the route is running commercially, with two new DiPTAC

Mercedes Dormobile midibuses on the route.

Proprietor Gilbert Kinch said: "We've built the route up over the years to the point where it can be operated commercially, and with the developing conflicts between the Fox and City-Bus, it's time to reinstate some of our traditional long-distance services into the city."

Kinch bus publicity promises the residents of Birstall direct services to Leicester, Loughborough, Sileby, Barrow upon Soar and Nottingham in October.

A service to Nottingham is already operated from Loughborough, but an extension through to Leicester will be in direct competition with Midland Fox.



Kinch has purchased more Mercedes mini-buses for the Outer Circle service

Mr Kinch said: "You can't put passengers off for too long. They've been demanding a return of the

Kinch service for some time, while we've been holding off because of the recession. Now it is the time to go."

... as Leicester war looms

THE impending Leicester bus war has been condemned by one of the participants as "senseless and unnecessary."

British Bus subsidiary, Midland Fox, has registered on six of CityBus's city routes with frequent services entailing another 36 buses per hour from September 20.

CityBus has responded by registering 20 vehicles on

Fox's most lucrative routes to Wigston, Loughborough and Goscote starting September 26.

Fox's action is seen in some quarters as an attempt to destabilise the new owners of CityBus after its own unsuccessful £6 million bid and bring them to the negotiating table.

CityBus managing direc-

tor David Shlackman said: "It seems to be the common thing to do nowadays when a company comes up for sale, but it doesn't do the bus industry much good. Fox will lose money because we can't let them get away with it."

Midland Fox's commercial manager Robin Pointon explained that he genuinely believed that a merger of Fox

and CityBus would have been to the benefit of the travelling public of Leicestershire.

"We have had to take steps to safeguard the future of this company and its employees, although we are sorry that we have been forced into this position against CityBus staff who we would have wished to become colleagues."

■ COACH AND BUS

Demo bus pressed into service

One of the last Carlyle-designed Dennis Darts built by Marshall SPV has been snapped up by a Cambridgeshire operator for a tendered service it is taking over next week from Luton & District.

CG Myall, based at Bassingbourn, required a DiPTAC-equipped bus at short notice after being awarded the four/five-year contract for a Hertfordshire County Council-supported seven times daily service from Hitchin to Baldock and surrounding vil-

lages. Other manufacturers were unable to supply in time and the 40-seat 9.8-metre Dart, earmarked as a demonstrator, was tracked down at the Birmingham Bus Centre.

It is the first DiPTAC bus in Myall's 11-vehicle fleet, but the company has expanded its local bus operations since early 1991, compensating for the loss of some long standing schools and works transport. All but one of its services are tendered.

It operates a group of former Premier Travel market

day services for Hertfordshire, centred on Royston, a Cambridge city service and a Cambridge-Huntingdon service on weekdays evenings and two Sunday services for Cambridgeshire, using a mix of minibuses and 40/41-seat Bedford SBs. The coach

fleet includes a 63-seat Duple 425 which is popular with large junior school groups. **CBW**



Birmingham Bus Centre supplied Dennis Dart

COACH AND BUS

Merseybus workers share bright future

EMPLOYEE shareholders of MTL Trust Holdings have been given encouraging forecasts for the future with the announcement that their stake of at least 250 free shares each is being valued at 80p per share.

Although MTL Trust Holdings was set up at the end of last year when Merseybus was sold to its employees for £1, shares were not distributed until March and an exact value of the shares not determined until now.

The purchase, from Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, came with an ongoing commitment of £5.9 million pensions payments and followed losses of £8 million on a £50 million turnover.

Workers had feared that their initial shareholding of

By Andrew Jarosz

250 shares plus an extra two for each year of service would have a minimal value as the company had still recorded losses of £3 million

last year.

MTL managing director Peter Coombes claimed the decision to purchase the company was a risk but one which would prove to have been worth taking.



Merseybus 'only just on starting blocks'

"As a company in a competitive race, we are only just on the starting blocks but this assessment by the company's financial advisers gives the Merseybus employees tangible evidence of the benefits which real success could bring.

"That success will be achieved by working harder to meet the needs of our customers and finding ways of further reducing operating costs so that we can keep ahead of the competition."

MTL has already opted for growth by taking over Kirkby-based independent Fareway and bidding for Bee Line Buzz operations in Rochdale. A new vehicle investment programme is coming on stream as well and further expansion is on the cards.

BUS

First new orders part of bigger investment plan

MERSEYBUS has placed its first substantial new vehicle orders for 1993/4 as part of an increased capital investment programme which has grown from £5 million to £8 million.

MTL Holdings had hoped to order 50 vehicles for delivery before next March, but supply difficulties mean that 43 Volvo B10Bs bodied by Wrights of Ballymena will be phased in over the next 12 months, with five promised for delivery before Christmas.

The Endurance-bodied vehicles, chosen after evaluation of various full-size single-deckers, will seat 51 and carry up to 22 standee passengers.

Engineering director Bob Dawson says an order of similar size is likely to be placed soon with a different manufacturer for new midibuses.

The investment programme in new vehicles involves expenditure of £5 million in the current financial year and a £3 million commitment into the next. The fleet upgrading comes on top of the purchase of 160 London Buses' Titans for refurbishment.

Mr Dawson said the company hoped to reduce the age profile and operating costs of the 1,100-vehicle fleet, and raise standards of reliability, comfort, and environmental compatibility.

"After several years of retrenchment it's good that we are able to make substantial investments for the future. We intend to lift the standard of the fleet, strengthening services in some areas and supporting a more general expansion of MTL's transport interests," he said.

COACH AND BUS

Volvo signs French deal for merger

VOLVO has signed a letter of intent with the French Government for the merger of the Swedish company with Renault.

The deal merges Volvo Bus, Volvo Truck, Volvo Car, Volvo Transport, Volvo Group Finance Sweden, Forsakrings AB Volvia and Volvofinans AB with all Renault operations to form a new company group, with the preliminary name Renault-Volvo. The new group will be one of the biggest automotive manufacturers in Europe.

Initially, the French Government will own 65 per cent, and AB Volvo the remainder, but the French Government intends to reduce its holding in the near future.

The companies will retain separate trademarks. A statement issued by Volvo said: "The development and enhancement of the respective trademark profiles will be an important element in the strategy of the new group."

Three years ago, Volvo has held 20 per cent of Renault's shares, with the French Government having the rest, but the company is set to be privatised by the new right-wing French Government, which is anxious the Swedes do not take total control of the new company.

The new group is due to commence operations on January 1, 1994. Head office functions will be split between Paris and Gothenburg.

CBW

THE ROYAL family now has a choice of 25 buses to catch outside Buckingham Palace's main entrance.

The latest edition is London General's new Dennis Dart service from Waterloo to Hammersmith.

Route 211 which takes over from route 11 from Hammersmith has a frequency of seven minutes in peak times and ten-minute services during shopping hours.

FRIENDS of King Alfred Buses, an organisation dedicated to collecting the historic Hampshire firm's vehicles, has secured the last missing bus at an American museum in Georgia.

The 1956 Leyland Titan was sold to Richmond County museum in 1973 after it had finished service in Winchester.

The Friends of King Alfred have struck a deal with the museum in which they will ship over a 1958 ex-Leicester Corporation bus in exchange for the 55-seat Titan.

Group members are to fly out to Georgia in October and drive the bus to Jacksonville in Florida, where it will be shipped to Southampton.

OVER 40 companies have donated lots for the Coach Tourism Council's charity auction on September 14.

Over £14,000 has been donated to the auction, which is part of the organisation's Coaching for Pleasure day in the West Midlands' Black Country. More than 1,300 group travel organisers are expected to bid for coach-based holidays, ferry crossings and air flights.

Companies such as Owners Abroad, Eurotunnel, Wallace Arnold and Forte have all donated lots to raise money for The Family Holiday Association, which organises trips for underprivileged families.

A NEW peak-hour service linking Mortlake and Barnes to the West End and the city has been given the go-ahead by London Transport for a six-month trial period.

London United will run double-deck Airbuses, normally used on the Heathrow-Central London Link. A spokesman said: "The purpose of the change is to reduce overcrowding at peak hours, restore direct links lost from Mortlake and Barnes and provide a comfortable alternative to changing at Hammersmith."

COACH AND BUS

L-reg boost to PSV sales

By Mike Morgan

WHILE the L-plate factor gave an 18 per cent boost to new car registrations, the PSV sector was not far behind. Coach and bus registrations during August confirmed the upward trend throughout the year with a 12.5 per cent rise which brings the average increase for the year to 6.4 per cent.

The latest figures supplied by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders place Volvo at the head of the table with 638 registrations this year. This is 40 per cent of a rising market and 21.3 per cent (112 vehicles) better than 1992.

Among the 'others' in the table are strong performances from German manufacturers. MAN has registered 50 PSVs in 1993 - mainly thanks to Optare Vectas sold to North East Bus and Reading. This challenge compares with 15 MAN deliveries for the first eight months of 1992. Mercedes-Benz has lifted its profile in the market from no full-size PSV sales in 1992 to 15 0405 registrations this year.

Market distortion caused by

R66 roll-over appears to have settled down, though many industry observers remain cautious about the consequences of the 100 km/h speed limiter setting on new coaches from January 1994. A further blip in the coach dealers sales graphs is anticipated towards the end of this year.

Despite rising registrations and reported forward orders, the bus sector is yet to come to terms with the role of the double decker in the dereg/privatised era with single deckers taking an increasing share of the market.

Optimistic trends over recent months have encouraged most manufacturers to develop revised or redesigned models now lined-up for the industry's show case - Coach and Bus 93 which opens at the NEC on October 7. Many new vehicle launches are expected and visitors can be sure of an opportunity to view the growing number of new vehicles released earlier this year - including the Volvo range and low-floor models from Dennis, Scania and Neoplan.

● Full preview of what to see in our October 2 issue.

COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS

	August		Year to date		1992	
	1993	1992	1993	%	No	%
Volvo	119	55	638	40.3	526	35.4
Dennis	34	57	386	24.4	420	28.3
DAF	15	14	172	10.9	167	11.2
Scania	8	14	102	6.4	122	8.2
Optare	6	11	76	4.8	94	6.3
Others	25	33	208	13.2	158	10.6
TOTAL	207	184	1582	100	1487	100

COACH REGISTRATIONS

	August		Year to date		1992	
	1993	1992	1993	%	No	%
Volvo	75	39	381	52.4	377	51.7
Scania	1	3	50	6.9	79	10.8
DAF	0	6	74	10.2	78	10.7
Dennis	6	9	50	6.9	43	5.9
Others	17	32	172	23.7	152	20.9
TOTAL	99	89	727	100	729	100

BUS REGISTRATIONS

	August		Year to date		1992	
	1993	1992	1993	%	No	%
Dennis	28	48	336	39.3	377	49.7
Volvo	44	16	257	30.0	149	19.6
DAF	15	9	98	11.5	90	11.9
Optare	6	11	76	8.9	94	12.4
Scania	7	11	52	6.1	43	5.7
Others	8	0	36	4.2	5	0.7
TOTAL	108	95	855	100	758	100

The above table details all vehicles on designated PSV underframes registered last month in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands Source: SMMT

BOOKING FORM

COACH AND BUS WEEK KORTRIJK TOUR 1993

Return this form to Paul Tappin, Managing Director, Tappins Coaches, Station Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7LZ. Tel 0235 812127 or fax 0235 816464.

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COACH AND BUS

On the road to Kortrijk

COACH AND BUS WEEK'S second European study tour in conjunction with Tappins Coaches is ready to whisk readers away to the Kortrijk coach and bus show. Places are limited, so give Paul Tappin a ring for further details and be sure to book early.

The three-day tour follows the outstanding success of our Open Europe study tour last March. It includes a visit to one of the Netherlands' premier coach operators, De Jong, Dutch coach and bus bodybuilder, Berkhof, and the top European PSV show at Kortrijk.

It gives readers a perfect opportunity to view and dis-

cuss with local experts the problems of European operation, design and construction of coaches and buses, and see at first hand all the latest vehicles from Europe's leading manufacturers.

We depart from London on Thursday October 14, 1993 and return on Saturday October 16.

Guided throughout by Paul Tappin of Tappins Coaches and Coach and Bus Week editor, Mike Morgan, the study tour special total package price starts at £150 per person. Bookings plus full payment must be sent to Paul Tappin at the address on the booking form not later than Thursday September 30, 1993.



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■ BUS

Harrogate gets tough on station

By Andrew Jarosz

HARROGATE District Council has voted to get tough with developers Ladbroke City and County Land and use compulsory purchase powers to take over the town's derelict bus station, which has been out of use for over two years.

The move follows an increasing tide of complaints against the inadequate provision of kerbside loading facilities, since bus operators were evicted by the developers.

It also stems from the council's impatience with the developers, who it had asked to include a bus station in their plans, and who have steadfastly refused to provide anything other than a bus layby in their proposals to build offices and shops on the former West Yorkshire Road Car property.

The council is prepared to buy the property from Ladbroke City and County Land but has rejected a suggestion of an exchange deal involving other land in the town and has failed to agree

on a purchase price.

Ladbroke City and County Land is believed to be trying to recoup at least £2 million of the £2.6 million it paid for the site to Parkdale Holdings, which bought almost the entire West Yorkshire Road Car property portfolio when the company was purchased from the National Bus Company in a joint deal with Alan Stephenson, who took over the bus operations.

Harrogate Council's consultants think a more realistic price would be between £200,000 and £0.5 million for the empty site, which has been boarded up, with the original passenger terminal facilities now demolished.

Giles Fearnley, chairman of the Blazefield Group companies which were evicted from the site, supported the council's decision and welcomed the opportunity to return to the former site.

"The existing on-street arrangements with terminal points scattered around the town are far from satisfactory," he said.

■ BUS

Darts score bullseye for Wilfreda Beehive

WILFREDA Beehive is the first operator to take up the challenge of South Yorkshire PTE's new specification for accessible vehicles.

This summer, the Doncaster-based company has been operating four Plaxton bodied Dennis Darts built to the SYPTe spec on routes in Doncaster and Barnsley, which have sparked such a good response from passengers that an order for four more has been placed.

Seating capacity on the 9.8-metre Darts is reduced to 36, plus 18 standees by the stringent specification which incorporates many DiPTAC recommendations, but in return operators are given double-length PTE contracts when conforming vehicles are used.

Wilfreda Beehive business development manager, Phil Haxby said:

"Although the buses only run on supported services during the early morning and evening, we thought the specification would appeal to passengers in its own right.

"Passenger reaction has been very good, as you would expect where Mark 1 Leyland Nationals were being replaced.



Left to right: Gary Williams of SYPTe, Jack Meredith and Phil Haxby with the Dennis Darts

"The smaller vehicles mean we can increase frequencies, although a small percentage of our National fleet will be retained and upgraded to Greenway spec where high-capacity vehicles are needed."

Special features include low entrance steps, flat floor interiors, ample legroom on all seats, high visibility grab rails and good luggage space.

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority chairman Jack Meredith said: "These buses are the

first in South Yorkshire to meet the new specification, and will be of immense benefit to the elderly and infirm, and to anyone else who might experience difficulty in using buses.

"They represent an investment in the future of public transport by Wilfreda Beehive and they illustrate the commitment that the PTA and PTE have to upgrading passenger facilities.

"Let's hope that more operators get the message and follow this example."

■ BUS

Low-height facility makes Olympians NCT's first choice

NOTTINGHAM City Transport has some of the first Volvo Olympians. All seven have 85-seat East Lancs bodywork - five are normal height, but the first two are low-height for its South Notts fleet.

John Lowrie, NCT engineering director, said: "Our choice of the Olympian on this occasion was dictated by the need for some low-height chassis and certain other operational needs.

"We continue to consider that the B10M Citybus flat-floor layout having minimal wheelbox intrusion and maximum area available for passengers is preferable to

transverse rear-engine layouts which severely limit lower deck seating."

The Olympians have Volvo 245 bhp Euro 1 engines coupled to ZF automatic gearboxes. However, NCT is expecting delivery of five Scania N113s, again with East Lancs bodywork which incorporates Nottingham's standard windscreen and steel front bumper.

All 12 chassis have 18ft 6in wheelbase to enable a high number of seats to be placed on the lower deck, together with luggage space over the nearside front wheel, and also beneath the staircase.

CBW



South Notts Volvos have low-height bodies

■ BUS

Citybus wins 28 of CMB's routes

CITYBUS of Hong Kong has won the tender to operate 28 routes in Hong Kong after 60 years of exclusive franchise to China Motor Bus.

From the beginning of September, the Kowloon-based firm has been given ten months to produce 200 double deckers and to recruit and train 500 staff.

The exhaustive programme saw the refurbishment of 100 Leyland AN68 Atlanteans from Singapore Bus Service and the purchase of 85 new Leyland Olympian double deckers.

By Ian Young

Citybus managing director Lyndon Rees said: "This has been the biggest trauma of my career and one I would not want to face again. It would have been much easier to take over an existing bus operation twice as big rather than to start everything up from scratch over such a short lead time.

"One of the biggest problems has been training 500 raw recruits to work together as a team of busmen from day one. Making

matters worse, September 1 was the first day of the new school year which complicated what was already an enormous logistical and operational exercise which went off as well as could be expected in extreme circumstances."

A shortfall of 38 buses was made up by switching vehicles from its contract services and hiring additional ones from rival companies.

Despite varied unfamiliar liveries and some drivers displaying wrong destina-



Citybus given ten months to produce 200 deckers and recruit and train 500 staff

tions, passengers increased by 20 per cent. This surpassed Citybus' own projections of a gradual 15 per cent rise.

Mr Rees said: "Such an enormous response has overwhelmed us on several critical corridors and proved the extent of suppressed

demand for better quality air-conditioned bus services."

The next four months sees another 53 high-capacity deckers go into operation and proposals for reshaping and expanding Hong Kong's bus network are to go ahead in the next few weeks.

■ BUS

Highland puts minis to test on its Tourist Trail

HIGHLAND Bus & Coach of Inverness is using its successful Tourist Trail for a head-to-head evaluation of two different makes of minibus.

First was a Mercedes 811D bodied by Wrights of Ballymena which is being followed by the second vehicle, an Iveco 59.12 with bodywork by Marshall of Cambridge.

The two competing vehicle types are being used in

opposite directions on the Inverness to Nairn tourist service. The Mercedes is operating via Culloden Battlefield, Cawdor Castle and returning from Nairn via Fort George - the Iveco will run the reverse route.

Bill Johnston, Highland general manager, said: "We purchased the different makes of vehicle so we could evaluate each vehicle before deciding on future purchases."



Highland is evaluating this Iveco and a Merc

■ BUS

Driver who saved blind man praised by Lothian

LOTHIAN Regional Transport praised a new driver who saved a blind man's life by swerving his bus into a runaway car.

Robert Ainslie turned into the path of a driverless Volvo heading towards Jim Borthwick, a blind passenger who had just got off the Edinburgh service bus.

Lothian operations manager Peter Burden said: "He is to be congratulated for his quick thinking. Normally we would be chasing a driver who had been involved in an accident. That would not be appropriate on this occasion."

Mr Borthwick, who escaped without injury, was wearing a personnel stereo and was oblivious to the accident, which he thought was a lorry backfiring.

He said: "I didn't realise that I had almost been run over and walked off to catch another bus."

Mr Ainslie said: "I saw the car hurtling towards me at the top of the hill. At first I got out of the way but then I reckoned it would hit the blind guy who was standing on the pavement at the back of the bus so I swerved back into the path of the car."

The Volvo had rolled 200

yards before scraping the off-side of the Leyland Olympian causing the car to crash into a wall. Nine passengers aboard escaped unharmed and the car only caused minor damage to the bus' front panels.

The former corporal, a Gulf War veteran, who had just finished his PSV training and had only been in the job a week when the accident occurred, said: "It wasn't my military training but my training as a driver that helped. The PSV instructors hammered into you the importance of passenger safety."

■ COACH AND BUS

Young driver fights restrictions

A YOUNG driver has written to John MacGregor and the House of Lords to protest against the PCV restrictions facing people under 21. Donna Beaman, of the West Midlands, argues that the restrictions facing 18-year-old drivers often mean in practice that they get no experience at all.

EC regulations limit under 21s to driving empty vehicles or on regular registered routes within 50 km of the depot.

Secretary of State for Transport John MacGregor said: "This arrangement strikes the right balance between road safety and young people who wish to make careers as

drivers." However, Miss Beaman argues the limitations are depriving young drivers of any experience, especially as operators increasingly need an adaptable workforce.

She said: "By 21 I will be able to drive anywhere in the world with very little experience a vehicle loaded with passengers. If the law was overturned PCV drivers would have already gained three years experience of driving and passenger safety."

Miss Beaman is interested in hearing from operators or young drivers who have been impeded by the law. Phone 0902 887555 or write to *Coach and Bus Week*. **CBW**



■ BUS

Buses down but cars up

By Richard Simpson

FIRST results from the 1991 London Area Transport Survey (LATS) show a rise in car use and decline in bus travel from the previous survey in 1981. The area covered by the survey is that within the M25 motorway.

Car travel is now the dominant mode of transport for Londoners, with this mode accounting for 68 per cent of all trips made - approximately five per cent more than in 1981.

Twenty seven per cent of trips made by Londoners in 1991 were by public transport. Train travel (Underground and British Rail) accounts for just under half of these, and 13 per cent of the total - a very similar proportion to that recorded in 1981. Preliminary analysis of bus travel, at 14 per cent of the total number of trips, indicates a reduction in use from 1981.

However, one-sixth of Londoners have a pass entitling them to free or reduced-rate travel on public transport, and one in nine owns a Travelcard.

Car ownership in London shows only a modest increase in the last 10 years. Over 60 per cent of Londoners now have access to a car, just three per cent more than in 1991.

Access to cars is linked very closely to income and location.

Levels of ownership increase away from the centre of the city, with less than 50 per cent of households in inner London having access to a car, compared to 80 per cent in the outer area.

Only one in six households with a gross annual income of less than £5000 had access to a car. This proportion rises rapidly through the lower income bands to reach over four-fifths of households in the £20,000 - £25,000 bracket.

Multiple car availability (households with two or more cars) is closely related to income levels.

LATS was commissioned by the London Research Centre on behalf of the London boroughs and the Department of Transport, and was carried out in conjunction with London Transport and British Rail.

The aim of LATS was to measure travel patterns in London, including residents and inward travellers in a £7 million programme of surveys.

Further results, including much more detailed information on public transport use, will become available when the database is completed at the end of the year.

■ COACH

Closure at Tower

THE TOWER of London's jewel house is to close next year to prepare for its most radical shake up for 30 years.

The house will be temporarily closed from October 4 to 7 this year to make way for a brand new jewel house with the capacity to cope with 20,000 visitors, five times its present capacity.

The jewel house will close on January 10 next year, to be replaced by a new display area by Easter.

The closure will mean price reductions for visitors and the opening of a new

attraction, the Medieval Palace of King Edward I which is housed above Traitor's Gate.

Marketing director Dylan Hammond said: "We have anticipated demand will grow and are confident that there will be no queues next year. We are also introducing visual information displays including a hi-definition television display."

Disabled access will be given priority and to avoid peak-hour log jams airport-style travelators are to be introduced.

The new jewel house is

being located in the Tower's armoury room which will see the collection more spread out.

It is anticipated that the larger audiences will get a longer look at the collection than in the present jewel house, which has been criticised for resembling a walk by shop window display.

The extensive armoury collection that is presently housed in the 700-year-old room is to be relocated at a new military museum in Leeds.

■ See Tourism section for further details: Page 38

■ BUS

Suburban doubles size

THE winning of LT's route 41, (Coach and Bus Week, August 28) will see Gensam subsidiary London Suburban double its fleet to 110 buses and mean a total additional investment at the Edmonton depot of £1.2 million.

Gensam managing director, Geoff Metcalfe said: "This is a tremendous boost just a few weeks before London Suburban starts operating on the 4 and 271 routes.

"We aim to provide a highly professional and reli-

able service and build London Suburban into a major operator in north London.

"The award of another route at this stage means that plans for the development of the company will now be brought forward."

■ COACH

The price is right

LEWIS of Greenwich says it cannot justify new vehicles for the increasingly competitive London coach market.

Peter Lewis, director, told *Coach and Bus Week*: "The company decided earlier in the year that brand new vehicles were very unrealistically priced and decided to purchase good pre-owned vehicles at a greatly reduced price enabling us still able to compete among the very increasing number of coach operators in the capital."

The company has adopted a new livery to mark its 75th anniversary and the City Central name for executive work.

First vehicle to receive the treatment is a Jonckheere P50-bodied DAF SB2300. Mr Lewis said: "The City Central Coach Company was taken over by ourselves two years ago and we have adopted its name for this high-class executive vehicle

following an upturn in work through its city-based telephone number.

"Any new additions during this winter will also feature this livery, but we may adopt a different running name."

The DAF was chosen for its large and accessible luggage area and is in-line with

the Lewis group's current buying policy of only rear engine vehicles for use on its extensive tour programme as well as prestige private hire work. The £35,000 coach was extensively refitted by Lewis. It has toilet, dual video system, 49 reclining seats, hot drinks, fridge and continental exit. **CBW**



Second-hand DAF will be used for executive work



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■ BUS

GEC Marconi does vehicle location deal

BERKSHIRE County Council has awarded a major contract to GEC Marconi for its Bus Tracker vehicle location and passenger information system.

The contract will involve fitting 20 Reading Buses vehicles with location transmitters, and equipping five bus shelters on the town's route 17 with real-time passenger information displays.

Frank Eveleigh, corporate adviser of highways and planning for Berkshire County Council, said:

"Berkshire County Council is pleased to be working with GEC Marconi to introduce a real-time passenger information system for Reading.

"GEC Marconi demonstrated, in competition with others, that it is capable of delivering a tested system which will be accurate and reliable."

This latest in succession of orders this year for GEC Marconi comes hard on the heels of the successful completion of the contract for LBL subsidiary London United to equip 35 of its vehicles on routes in west and south west London with Bus Tracker.

■ COACH AND BUS

Henlys makes £3.2m profit for half year

GROUP PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNTS (UNAUDITED)

	Six months ended June 30 1993 £,000	Six months ended June 30 1992 £,000
Net turnover:		
Motor	154,479	128,842
Coach & Bus	33,685	37,614
Total	188,164	166,456
Operating profit		
Motor	3,833	3,256
Coach & Bus	438	(1,019)
Total	4,271	2,237
Reorganisation costs	-	(950)
Operating profit after exceptional items	4,271	1,287
Interest payable (net)	(1,333)	(2,352)
Investment income	277	167
Profit on ordinary activities before tax	3,215	(898)
Taxation	(700)	(125)
Profit (loss) after tax	2,515	(1,023)
Dividends	(567)	(375)
Transfer to (from) reserves	1,948	(1,398)
Dividends per share	1.5p	1.0p
Earnings (loss) per share	6.6p	(2.7p)

By Richard Simpson

HENLYS, the Plaxton parent, has announced a £3.2 million profit for the half-year ending June 1993, and the Coach & Bus Division turned a £1 million loss plus £0.95 million restructuring costs in the same period in 1992 into a profit before interest of £0.44 million.

Action taken last year in the £0.95 million drive to improve efficiency paid off for the Coach & Bus Division in 1993.

A healthier PSV market, with sales up six per cent on the previous year, saw production increased at Plaxton. The Kirkby coach dealership continued to reduce its stock of used vehicles and showed a worthwhile improvement in profit from a lower, more normal level. The Roadlease finance and coach after-market business again performed satisfactorily.

The outlook for the Coach & Bus Division is good. Plaxton's order-book is at the highest level for four years and margins at Kirkby Coach and Bus are continuing to improve.

An interim share dividend of 1.5p has been declared - an increase of 50 per cent on last year. **CBW**

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Numbers will be limited, so it is important to apply early. The cost per delegate is £65 + VAT and includes morning coffee, buffet lunch and tea. Seminars start at 10am and finish at 4pm.

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A receipt, together with joining instructions will be sent to delegates in advance of the workshop.

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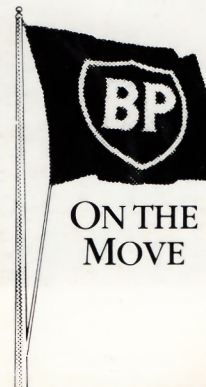
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y Tour [♪] *by* **Scania**

Comfortshift gearbox, we now have 25 of their vehicles" – Simon Budden, Managing Director, Budden Coaches Ltd.

Why belts are not the answer to kids' safety

I RECENTLY received a letter from BUSK, an acronym for an inelegant name: Belt Up School Kids. The secretary thought that I might be "in a position to help or advise and maybe give support to our campaign".

She explained that, "Apart from trying to get legislation passed to make seat belts compulsory (sic) in coaches and mini-buses which transport schoolchildren, we are trying to improve safety standards in general, which includes such issues as: Children not being permitted to man doors and drivers making sure doors are secure before moving away; to stop overcrowding on school transport; to seek an introduction of escorts/conductors on bigger buses."

The motivation for this is a 1991 ROSPA statistic that 446 children were injured on school buses.

Whilst I totally agree that children should not man doors and drivers should not move off with open doors, and I support on financial (rather than safety) grounds the abolition of the 'three for two' seating rule; I do not support this campaign and advise why in the hope that it may be helpful.

Apart from the impossibility of actually getting all pupils on a school coach or mini-bus to actually wear any seat belt provided, and ignoring their natural proclivity to write, cut, or stick chewing gum to anything in sight (thus making seats unusable by others); I would point out two facts of life to this organisation:

Firstly, as a recent television documentary showed, a child restrained by a lap belt can be injured

for life by the belt itself on sudden deceleration of the vehicle. As a child's body is jack-knifed forward by momentum, a lap belt is doing its best to cut that small body into two.

Secondly, it is simply not possible to fit the safer diagonal seat belts on a PSV. For on the seats nearest the window, only glass is available as an anchorage point - scarcely

better than on the aisle side, where there is nothing but air space where the top of a diagonal lap belt would require anchoring. Hence coach seats that are cushioned

to themselves form restraints.

The practicalities apart, I wonder whether there is even a scintilla of evidence to support the desirability of seat belts being used by children on coaches and mini-buses.

For BUSK excludes buses from its seat belt campaign - yet the only statistic produced includes bus journeys. BUSK fails to advise how many of these injuries had long term or life threatening implications. Perhaps because it goes without saying, they neglected to mention that a sizeable proportion, perhaps a majority, were boarding and alighting incidents. How many arose from assaults by other pupils? How many by hanging out of windows? How many by standing up? How many by falling down on the stairs of a decker?

How many choked on confectionary or were cut by soft drink cans? Those of us who daily transport school children know that most 'injuries' are occasioned by these sort of things - none of which would be made any less likely if seat belt use was compulsory.

I am not being at all flippant in suggesting to BUSK that, if they really want to see an improvement in the very small numbers of child injuries on PSVs (compared to the home, in which parents themselves are in charge); they would be far better occupied inducing their children to simply remain seated, in a forward facing direction, and not be eating meals 'on the hoof', when riding to and from school; and to desist from pushing and shoving when boarding and alighting.

Quotes to note

T HE recently published reports of the traffic commissioners to the Secretary of State for Transport for the year ending 31st March 1993 contain some interesting and illustrative statements which the industry would do well to note and ponder.

Keith Waterworth NETA

"The Licencing Review Board has been effective in providing enforcement information about operators and applicants. My aim is to identify problem operators at an early stage and seek to improve their performances before they become a threat to road safety."

John Mervyn Pugh WMTA

Commenting on the loss of vocational licences after criminal convictions: "In my experience those applicants for provisional licence whose family or themselves bear the cost of their own training are much less likely to commit further offences than those who have those costs paid for them, especially by an employer."

Compton Boyd ETA

Noting that of 37 appeals made to the Transport Tribunal against Commissioners' decisions, 18 had subsequently been withdrawn, he draws the conclusion, "That some operators appeal without any intention of following the appeal through to its conclusion and do so solely to prolong an existing business arrangement."

Echoing the industry concern about minibuses. "The laudable intention behind the minibus legislation of exemption for certain bodies from the full rigours of public service vehicle operator licencing now requires review. The minibus legislation has not kept pace in particular with the change in legal status of bodies who may now be

engaged in profit-making activities, something which appears to conflict with the exemption requirements."

John Mervyn Pugh SWTA

"Local registered services still cause a problem [by] not running in accordance with their timetables. As I frequently point out the services that [operators] register are services of their own choice: surely it is not too difficult for an operator to adhere to the timings and route that they - and only they - have registered? It may well be necessary if these breaches continue to take Draconian action against offenders."

Ron Ashford WTA

"The overall prohibition rate shows a sharp drop.....and points to a significant increase in the roadworthiness of our buses and coaches. However, the reduction has not been reflected in the annual test results as one might reasonably expect. Thus an improvement in standards seems unlikely.

"I suspect that the improvement has come about for other reasons. Vehicle Examiners have become more lenient especially on those items which do not affect road safety; more new vehicles have been checked, and there has been some error in collation."

Michael Turner SETA

"I am also tending more and more to require new operators to forward copies of their audited accounts at the end of their first and perhaps second year of operation."

Martin Albu NMTA

From an enforcement check at Blackpool Illuminations, "...in excess of 2,000 vehicles and 8,700 tachograph discs were examined.

"As a result the Traffic Examiners raised 159 reports regarding 206 offences."

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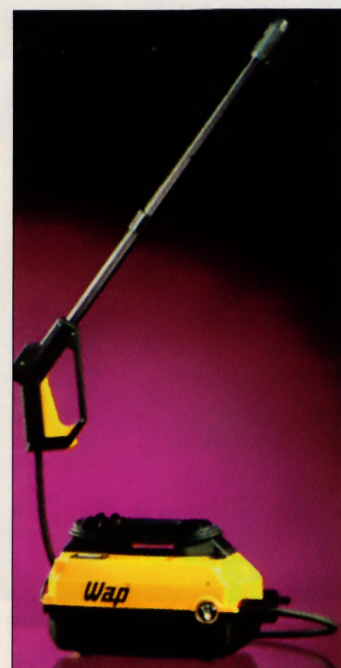
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Scania

1983 (Y) SCANIA K112
JONCKHEERE P50,
49 reclining seats + corier, centre sunken
toilet, Telma, continental door,
radio/PA/cassette, tinted glass, curtains,
MoT March 1994.

Daf

1984 (A) DAF SB 2300 DHS
PLAXTON 3200,
6 speed splitter ZF gearbox, 53 E type
seats, radio/PA/cassette, power door, tin-
tmed glass, curtains Mot May 1994.

Neoplan

1983 (PP) NEOPLAN-SKYLINER
MERCEDES V10 - ZF MANUAL,
77 retrimmed seats + courier, toilet, fridge,
water boiler etc. -current MoT.

1985 (B) NEOPLAN JETLINER (DAF
11.67 ENGINE)
6 speed ZF gearbox, 49 reclining seats +
courier (rettrimmed), sunken centre toilet,
radio/PA/cassette, MoT 30/8/94

Leyland

1989 (F) LEYLAND TIGER
(CUMMINS L10 - 2500, ZF
MANUAL GEARBOX PLAXTON
3200, 53 recliners + 4 standees, double
glazed tinted blinds to side windows.
radio/pa/cassette, Telma, ABS & chassis
autolube, excellent value & condition,
MoT's from Nov '93 to Feb '94
2 ONLY REMAINING

1986 (C) LEYLAND TL11-260
5 speed hydraulic gearbox, Berkhof
Everest 3.7h/floor, 49 reclining seats, o/s
centre sunken toilet, o/s continental door,
curtains, choice of 4, 2.
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VOLVO

1987 (D) VOLVOB10M
- PLAXTON 3200
(low driver), Telma, 53 Vogel seats
and courier, double glazed, curtains,
radio/pa/ cassette, part pannier lock-
ers, MoT 1994.

VANHOO

1988 (E) VAN HOOL T815
ALIZEE H. (CUMMINS L10).
6 speed, ZF gearbox, 49 recliners +
courier, o/s centre continental door,
o/s centre sunken toilet.
Doubled glazed, TV, drinks,
radio/PA/Cassette, drivers bunk,
maroon curtains, Webasto + Telma.
1 ONLY REMAINING MoT 3/2/94

Toyota

1989 (G) TOYOTA - OPTIMO
(6cyl), 18 seats, curtains, power door,
current MoT.

BEDFORD

1982 (Y) BEDFORD YNT
PLAXTON SUPREME VI
53 seats + courier, double glazed,
radio/PA/cassette, MoT 12/5/94

1982 (X) BEDFORD YNT
PLAXTON SUPREME V QT
49 reclining seats + courier, tinted
glass, power door, MoT 24/10/93

DENNIS

1988 (JULY) DENNIS JAVELIN, 12
METRE DUPL 320 SL,
air suspension, ferry lift, 53 reclining seats
+ courier, O/S rear sunken toilet, continen-
tal door, drinks machine, radio / PA / cas-
sette + TV, tinted glass, full draw
curtains, fully carpeted, power door, interi-
or, grey red, orange chevron moquette,
exterior cream and orange, MoT July 94.

Duple 425

1988 E DUPL 425-
CUMMINS L10, AUTOMATIC GEAR-
BOX, 50 seats + courier, rear sunken toi-
let, continental door, fridge, drinks
machine, MoT 3/1/94.
1988 E DUPL 425-
CUMMINS L10, 7 SPEED
MANUAL GEARBOX, 51 reclining
seats + courier, sunken toilet,
fridge, drinks machine, continental door,
choice of two, MoT's 23/12/93 & 6/1/94.

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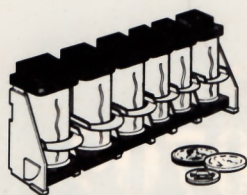
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DKV, 290 hp, Telma retarder,
Webasto, 49 reclining seats, couri-
er seat, centre toilet, continental
door, 2xTV/video, boiler, fridge,
bunk, double glazing, carpets and
curtains, air conditioning...£76,000

1986 (D) DAF MB200 DKFL VAN
HOOL ALIZEE, 48 recliners, centre
sunken toilet, boiler, courier seat,
video.....£49,950

1987 (d) IEYLAND TIGER 260
DUPLÉ 340, 48 recliners, rear
sunken toilet, boiler, fridge, video,
cont. door.....£39,000

1986 (C) VOLVO B10, CAETANO
ALGARVE, 49/53 seats, centre toi-
let, courier seat, blinds, continental
door
.....£41,000

1986 (C) DAF SB23000 DHS
PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 32000,
47 recliners, centre sunken toilet,
single glazed.....£34,000

1984 P/P DAF MB DKFL VAN
HOOL ALIZEE, 48 recliners,
servery with every cupboard and
boiler and curtains and carpets,
courier seat, video.....£41,500



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Sell your bus bodies with a touch of style

From Ray Stenning

SIR

I would like to add my own thoughts to your feature on bus advertising in last week's *Coach and Bus Week*.

Your bus is out on the street selling its body - nothing wrong with that. You need an agency of some sort to get you the business. But you must not let it control you totally. Have some self respect. Your customers (your *raison d'être*) will think more of you.

Why do so many operators with a half decent (or extremely good) livery and image let it be spoilt by the unthinking application of inappropriate adverts? I'm not against ads on buses - far from it.

I'm just saddened by the way an operator's image is adulterated, diluted or destroyed by ugly adverts, badly designed, unsympathetically positioned, or just plain inappropriate. The backs of some London double-deckers were adorned a while ago by an ad saying "Wouldn't you rather be looking at the back of a new Daimler from so-and-

so".

What pride in your product! Come on, get wise!

I've seen carefully designed brand names half obliterated by a huge advert.

Just stop and think what that says to your customers. It says, I don't care about informing you who I am, I'm not serious about this branding, I'm not serious about you.

Can you imagine Marks and Spencer fly posting ads on their shop fronts, half covering their name? Do you really believe it doesn't matter?

Why invest time, effort and hard earned cash on a good livery which helps to sell you and then stick something across a vital part of its effect, or stick on an ad that causes such a discord with your colours or virtually destroys their effect. You see it all the time. Or leave buses running around with bits of paint removed where adverts have been taken off badly.

Is it because you don't care, or are you so scared of the advertising agencies that you daren't speak out for your own ends. It really can be prostituting yourself.

Sometimes it's simply care in positioning, so that an ad doesn't clash with a livery feature. Or saying no, that turquoise ads will clash terribly with my colours. Or yes, if you trim two inches off the top to make it float nicely in a plain area. Be tough - generally speaking London Transport is. Adverts are restricted to specific areas and usually they look OK.

Don't let the agencies dictate how they're going to cover your buses. They simply see your bus as a huge mobile poster site. You're just an advertising medium to them. They want you, they need you, just as much as you need them.

Be in control. If you were, they'd respect you more. Then we'd get good looking ads looking good for the advertiser and looking good for you. And doing all of the businesses involved a lot more good.

What so many people don't seem to understand is that the siting of a poster has a considerable effect on its effect. If the overall effect of poster plus your livery is a mess, you both lose out, and the man in the street gets an eyesore.

Occasionally an all over ad can be visually stunning and witty, but usually it's nightmare on High Street. Too much writing and pictures are plastered indiscriminately all over, and I wonder who wins. You get the cash but your bus looks a bloody mess, which is hardly a good advert for you.

The advertiser fails to get his message across but you won't tell him that and the agency certainly won't. The passenger and the environment receive grievous visual assault, and let's face it who feels proud arriving home in a mobile flyposters' paradise.

Come on now, get as much as you can for external advertising, but be wise about it. Sell the parts of your bus body that help your revenue base but let them enhance your image. You take control.

Be proud of who you are. Your prime business is passengers, customers. Think about them. Be glamorous, be sexy, be alluring. Not some shabby tart. It can be done. Do it!

Ray Stenning
Best Impressions

Can anybody help us to help disabled?

From Roy Godden

SIR

I am setting up a charity to help disabled people take holidays abroad.

Application to become a registered charity is going through, and what we are aiming for at this stage is as much publicity and sponsorship as possible from various companies and organisations who may be interested in assisting us to reach our goal, which is to purchase a coach or bus which will be adapted

accordingly to suit the requirements of disabled passengers.

We would be most grateful if you could find the time to allocate space to promote our charity in *Coach and Bus Week*.

Roy Godden
57 Rowland Drive
Greenhill
Herne Bay
Kent
CT6 7SD

● Anyone who can assist Mr Godden in any way can contact him on 0227 368356.

We're ferry good too

From A E Farrell

SIR

I was disappointed to note the Ferry Update section in issue 78.

William Golden headed his article "how to get the best out of some of the leading ferry companies" but omitted any mention of North Sea Ferries.

Perhaps I would have had less grounds for complaint had we not been larger in both terms of fleet and numbers of passengers and vehicles carried, than some of those featured and for your information we carry in excess of one million passengers a year on our two routes from Hull to Rotterdam

(Europoort) and Zeebrugge.

On the coaching side we carry groups throughout the year for many coach operators based in predominantly Scotland, the north of England, and North Wales and I feel it is a little unfortunate that as the only northern ferry operator featuring mainland Europe on a daily basis throughout the year, no mention should be given to us although it would be of benefit to your readers.

A E Farrell
UK passenger sales & marketing
manager
North Sea Ferries
King George Dock
Hedon Road
Hull

New for old as Atlantean comes of age

THE latest generation of buses bring new standards of comfort and efficiency to the urban scene. Low entrance steps, wide clutter-free circulation areas, bright handrails in plentiful supply and an interior that invariably features coach-like soft trim and improved seating.

Add to this package refined suspension together with state of the art transmission coupled to environmentally conscious engine and you have vehicles geared to meeting demands in a revived marketplace where the customer comes first.

However, all is not necessarily perfect in this landscape of bright, cheerful and friendly public transport. Such technology invariably comes at a high price and threatens to bring additional and unnecessary complexity which, when things go wrong, could possibly keep vehicles off the road when a simpler design may be expected to keep on going.

But aren't ageing buses unreliable? Fylde Borough Transport engineering director, Mike Sagrott, has confronted the old versus new dilemma. Out of Fylde's fleet of 96 coaches and buses, he has 52 Atlanteans of various ages, including some which have been subjected to varying degrees of refurbishment. His experience has not only identified the Atlantean's foibles, but has presented solutions to its most serious shortcomings. Consequently he has practised a little ingenuity to eradicate the faults and produce a vehicle that he believes offers an irresistible blend of engineering and commercial appeal.

The latest product to emerge from Fylde's Squires Gate workshops takes developments in an unusual and imaginative direction. It is a new single-decker on a re-engineered Atlantean chassis. Although others have done similar work before, the Fylde concept is much more than a new body on old chassis.

"First priority is to maximise the potential of anything we've got," explained Mr Sagrott with thinly veiled reference to his Yorkshire upbringing. "We would have liked to purchase more Optare Deltas, which at £85-90,000 a-piece are a big financial commitment, particularly at a

Fylde Borough Transport's rapid expansion resulted in a mainly standardised fleet based on Leyland Atlanteans. What better than to develop the model into a new breed of midibus? Mike Morgan examines the logic



Bus started life as Bradford Corporation decker



New bodies come from Northern Counties

time when we were buying new and secondhand coaches.

"So we went for the best way to improve our image at minimum cost.

"Although we've standardised on Atlanteans, we recognised a movement in favour of single-decks. On our mainline route their capacity is ok and vandalism is reduced."

So with the parameters in place - improved image, minimum cost, Atlantean, single deck - the refurbish/rebody strategy rapidly took shape.

Successful links with Kingston-upon-Hull City Transport had produced a steady supply of quality second-hand double-deckers for Fylde's Blue Buses expansion. Consequently it was inevitable that the company turned to Hull for further supplies just as a batch of five 33ft Alexander-bodied Atlanteans were available.

These former Bradford Corporation vehicles seemed ideal and their refurbishment could lead to the withdrawal of Fylde's five non-standard Bristol REs.

As with most well laid plans there is usually something to upset the apple cart. In Fylde's case it was the period of uncertainty preceding the management buyout at body-builder, Northern Counties.

The radical route to single-deck rebodging was put on the back burner while a programme of double-deck refurbishment went through Northern Counties' Wigan works. Meanwhile only four of the five Hull vehicles could be obtained and these were consigned to Hardwick's Carlton scrap yard to have bodies stripped prior to suspended tow to Squires Gate.

These chassis looked in a sorry state as they languished behind the depot, but Mr Sagrott and his small team had plans.

Build

Although financial constraints kept these plans within sensible bounds, there was a determination to produce a 'new' bus. Despite KHCT's acknowledged high standards of maintenance, new springs and brake drums were fitted. Reconditioned engine, gearbox and fluid flywheels were sourced, but more importantly serious thought was directed towards

improvements.

The Atlantean's Achilles heel is widely recognised as the shaft drive to the radiator fan and the radiator working loose despite the use of a third-generation bracket. A rad-alarm had long been considered essential if serious damage was to be prevented.

However, experimentation on two double-deck 'refurbs' had confirmed the value of moving the offending radiator to the front with a unit from an Albion Clydesdale truck using Bristol VR mountings and an electric fan.

As the engineering work progressed, Northern Counties emerged from its temporary difficulties and thoughts of a Paladin-bodied Atlantean became a serious contender. By merging the Paladin front designed for the Volvo B10B with a rear appropriate for a Dennis Dart and locating the emergency door amidships to allow optimum seating, this unlikely combination became a realistic prospect.

To accommodate a body conceived for a chassis with a longer front overhang presented no problem. A chassis extension using Atlantean outriggers also provided an ideal location for the front-mounted radiator.

To prevent the build-up of water in the vehicle's air system a heated Haldex condenser drain valve is activated by the brake. The archaic mechanical handbrake was removed in favour of the universal spring-release type which required brake chambers and an extra air tank from an AN68 Atlantean.

Mr Sagrott's team replaced the auto lube with their own design. Following trials on the earlier refurbs, the Fylde system is activated when reverse is selected. "It's brilliant," says its designer.

Although 21 years old, the 33 ft Atlanteans had Leyland's power steering as standard, so, mercifully there was no need for any further modification to the controls. However air-locking and expensive overhauls dictated that the CAV hydraulic governors be exchanged for a mechanical type.

Because it was desirable to reduce the height of the engine compartment so that seats could be built over the engine bay, the CAV air filters were dispensed with in favour of polycarbonate filters located on the chassis.

Yet open up the engine flap on one of the completed vehicles and these modifications appear insignificant compared with two other dramatic changes produced in the interests of improved reliability and performance.

The exhaust has been re-routed across the top of the engine and down to a Leyland Leopard exhaust which lies across the rear of the chassis and emerges through a discreet hole in the lower rear panel. The coolant filler cap is still more or less where it used to be, but is now linked to a one-gallon header tank.

Much more startling is 'Sagrott's turbo-charger'. Simple yet stunningly effective, this is fitted where the radiator once stood. It consists of two Clayton heater blowers which provide a continuous boost through trunking linked to the inlet manifold. The aim is to boost acceleration at low engine revs. Does it work? Well, after a full *Coach and Bus Week* in-service road test we have the answer.

Driving impressions

With around 6,000 Atlanteans on the road, Mike Sagrott believes that it is the bus to refurbish. The point is that the characteristics of such an ubiquitous vehicle are familiar. Atlanteans are straightforward to repair and predictable to drive.

A modern cab and a pale blue coating on Leyland's man-sized steering wheel do not disguise the humble origins. Bradford's former trolleybus drivers may have found the jumbo-sized Atlantean a daunting prospect in 1972, but that was before most of today's drivers reached the age of majority.

Is this not a vintage vehicle with a vintage feel and lethargic performance well out of step with modern traffic?

Surprise, surprise, the reaction of Fylde drivers suggests the answer is no. Apart from the size and elevation of the steering wheel there is little to identify the age of the technology. Steering may be a little vague with a hint of castor action through the wheel, but braking is amazingly positive - if a touch heavy. Perhaps the cumbersome pneumocyclic pedestal gear change is ponderous when compared with a modern fully-automatic 'box, yet some drivers prefer to control the changes, which - as long as the engine is idling correctly - are invariably smooth.

Select gear (make sure the doors are closed otherwise an interlock prevents engagement and avoids drag on the flywheel) release the handbrake and right foot down for acceleration.

Now you do feel the Atlantean's age. True those blowers do their work and acceleration times are respectable, but it's the ride that lets the side down.

Mike Sagrott confesses that air-suspension would have been a desirable, but costly, option. Lever-arm front shock absorbers replace the telescopic type to allow the pipes to the radiator to be routed along the chassis. Mr Sagrott says these have not affected the ride, but in any case the unladen weight of 9190 kg is close to that of a double-deck.

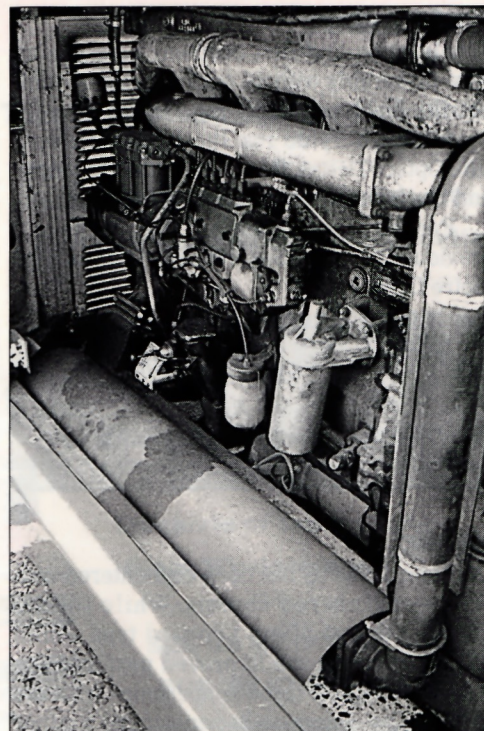
However, lowering front tyre pressure by 10 psi compensates for the reduced unladen weight and the different ride characteristics of a single decker. While by no means bad, the steel-sprung ride is firm and by the turn of the millennium will date the vehicle.

Passenger impressions

Externally the Paladin is the very image of modernity - despite the K suffix plate from another age.

Inside 42 Richards and Shaw dual purpose seats are fitted to add to the passenger appeal. Fylde was seeking an up-market image for the 14 mile Cleveleys to St Annes number 11 service. Mr Sagrott says the specification has been well received, though the 60/40 entrance step quickly proved inappropriate.

With Northern Counties' help a shallow 10 cm intermediate step solved the problem. While defeating any attempt at equal height steps, it provides a reassuring entrance arrangement for less mobile passengers. Although the high back seats are undoubtedly



Engine mods include electric "turbo" and Leopard exhaust

comfortable - apart from the rear bench which has lost its headrests at the expense of an uncomfortable ridge at shoulder blade height - the limited top speed potential (50 mph) blunts the appeal of this type of vehicle for excursion work.

Heating is through the latest type of perimeter radiator system, ventilation is provided by conventional hopper vents and noise levels are on a par with recent designs.

Our test bus had a noisy rear extraction fan which detracted from a very favourable impression. The Paladin body is solidly constructed and well finished.



Dual purpose seats add to appeal

Performance

Acceleration and fuel economy do not compare favourably with an equivalent new vehicle with the same seating capacity.

Although Fylde run the Paladins alongside Optare Deltas, this later vehicle is longer and firmly in the single-deck big bus league.

For the record these are the results of a previous *Coach and Bus Week* road test on a 9.8 metre Dennis Dart.

Criteria	Paladin	Dart
0-30 mph	15 sec	10.5 sec
Economy	8.5 mpg	12.5 mpg
Unladen weight	9,190 kg	5,815 kg
Length	10.5 metre	9.8 metre

Verdict

Only one difficulty has been encountered with the re-engineered chassis. While the re-routed exhaust offers Leopard type sound effects to match the improved performance from the 'Sagrott turbo', experience with the Squires Gate bus wash has encouraged a minor amendment. The brush wash placed strains on the exhaust. Consequently it has been shortened pending a 45 degree angle being welded to the tail pipe.

A low entrance step (25 cm) is considered virtuous on a modern bus and the Fylde Atlantean is no exception despite its steel springing.

Drivers seen aware of the need to respect the low approach angle when visiting bus

stops - though this is made more difficult with the chassis extension effectively placing the driver further from the windscreen, impairing judgement.

Northern Counties continued the low-height theme with all skirt panels and those behind the rear axle have proved vulnerable when the rear wheels are kerbed.

The next step for Fylde is likely to be a

short wheelbase rebody which could pass-off as a midibus yet retain heavyweight advantages and fit into a workshop geared-up to repairing the marque. Capacity could be up to 46 seats with 19/20 standees.

Costs of the first four rebodies average out at £55,000 - £40,000 for the body plus purchase price of the chassis and the expense of stripping/overhauling.

SPECIFICATION		DIMENSIONS	
Chassis:	Leyland Atlantean PDR2/10 metre	Length:	10.36 metres
Body:	Northern Counties Paladin - 42 seats plus 20 standees	Width:	2.5 metres
Price:	£55,000	Height:	3 metres
Engine:	Leyland 680	Wheelbase:	5.64 metres
Power:	165 bhp (123 kW) * 2,000 rpm	Unladen weight:	9,190 kg
Capacity:	11 litres	GVW:	16,000 kg
Torque:	500 Lbf ft (678 Nm) * Pneumocyclic four speed semi-automatic	PERFORMANCE	
Steering:	Power assisted	Acceleration (unladen):	0-30 mph - 15 secs 0-40 mph - 25 secs 0-50 mph - 35 secs
Brakes:	Front: drums Rear: drums Handbrake: spring release	Fuel economy: test consumption -	8.5 mpg Fylde's refurbished Atlantean average - 8.75-9 mpg
Suspension:	Steel springs front and rear	Noise levels at 40 mph:	Cab - 77 dB(A) Middle - 77 dB(A) Rear - 77 dB(A)
Drive axle:	Leyland	*Power and torque figures are for standard 680 engine	
Tyres:	Michelin 11.00x22.5		

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W

AS coach and bus refurbishment merely the "flavour of the month" last year? Or are the possibilities of extending vehicle life to that enjoyed by new vehicles at lower capital costs still worth it?

The heady days of coach refurbishment appear to have peaked as new vehicle registrations tentatively rise - yet demand for repower packages and mechanical reconditioning seems to be increasing. One coach operator riding the current trend is Scunthorpe-based Hornsby Travel Services Ltd. Managing director and majority shareholder Raymond Hornsby runs a fleet of 26 vehicles, including nine Leyland Tigers, and sees the advantages:

"Although we buy two new coaches every year on a constant programme of fleet renewal, problems sometimes arise," he says. "One 1983 Leyland Tiger suffered an engine seizure. It is used on our in-house tours programme - so it is otherwise in a good condition. We went for an engine repower package to get the machine back on the road - and found it had the added advantage of freeing pumps and other ancillary engine componentry to use as spares for the rest of the fleet." He adds that Hornsby is now considering buying a similar repower package for one of its Leyland Nationals.

On the bus side, such mechanical refurbishment is becoming widespread - and long-serving Leyland Nationals are the prime target. Trent Motor Traction is going for it in a big way, and intends to run its fleet of 126 Nationals well into the next century. But Trent's engineering director Trevor Yeo adds a cautionary caveat for others considering the move:

"The finance is not justified purely on projected engine life," he says. "It only becomes attractive

Refurbish capital

when one considers future engine emissions requirements. This is the really important point. The old Leyland 510 diesel engines were suffering from noticeable emissions problems while also coming to the end of their useful lives." Trent is currently comparing two rival repower packages for its fleet.

However, Trent's refurbishment programme does not end with fitting new and rebuilt engines. It is retrimming the seats with a newly designed moquette and repainting with its new colour scheme of Ayers red and cream with black skirt panels. Then the paintwork and vinyls are being coated with clear varnish - to protect both and add further longevity to the whole life of the total finish.

Such refurbishment is not the first to be carried out on Trent's Nationals. Previous work has involved modifications including the fitment of hydraulic fans, new power doors, electric wipers and a host of other alterations. The latest work is layered on top. "The Leyland Nationals will now be extremely acceptable vehicles for our operation," says Mr Yeo. The cost? The engine repower packages cost over £12,000, seat upholstery £1,500 and repainting £2,000 per vehicle. And the

Rod Davey examines bus and coach and looks at

payback? "The vehicles are now well liked by passengers and drivers," adds Mr Yeo.



Yorkshire Terrier has opted for

ment cuts l costs

ines the world of refurbishment - current trends.

London General's decision to go for the mechanical and structural refurbishment of its Leyland

Nationals, used principally on its Red Arrow routes, has more to do with political policy and economics than marketing image. Says managing director Keith Ludeman: "We are still publicly owned - but are in the process of preparing for privatisation. This means that the capital available to us is extremely limited - and any fleet renewal has to be funded directly from revenues only."

The company's large fleet of Nationals all date from 1981, so presented the problem of their life expectancy ending at the same time. New buses on 10-metre heavy duty chassis do not come cheap, so Mr Ludeman's board went for the comprehensive refurbishment of chassis, bodies and interior saloons, costing around £60,000 per vehicle. Euro 1 engines and new automatic gear-boxes have been fitted - along with the repanelling of body work, new glazing and a redesign of the front and rear ends.

Inside, the vehicles have been refloored and new convection heating has been installed, with the Nationals' characteristic rear roof pods disappearing. New laminate panelling has been fitted, along

with the fitment of full Diptac specification, and the old seats removed. These have been replaced by 24 plastic moulded seats, upping the standee capacity to 46. "We now have Continental-style city buses which are extremely well suited to London operation and are good for at least another 10 years, taking us into the next century of operation," Mr Ludeman adds.

With Yorkshire Terrier, Leyland Nationals and repower packages have again proved the number one choice for refurbishment.

According to joint managing director Glyn Keeling: "We've installed one so far. It's a good idea because it fits in nicely without any structural alterations being required. The new engine gives us better emissions levels than the Leyland 510 - and fuel economy is also improved."

So, quite obviously, Leyland Nationals have occupied the focus of attention from the bus and coach refurbishment industry. But they are not the end of the story.

For example, Merseybus is currently dealing with 120 Leyland Titan double decks it bought from London Transport. According to Dr Robert Dawson, MTL Trust Holdings' director of engineering, the refurbishment work on the vehicles represents a very thorough programme.

Merseybus is upgrading the vehicles' cooling systems and standardising the electrical systems. Further upgrading includes the removal of centre passenger doors, the replacement of exterior panels as required, the installation of soft trim to the lower saloon and reflooring. Merseybus drivers now enjoy an improved cab environment and driver's seat.

But some of the most interesting aspects of the Titans' upgrade concern the upper saloon and the company's desire to

REFURBISHMENT - WHO DOES WHAT

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re-engine its Leyland Nationals



REFURBISHMENT - WHO DOES WHAT

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Keith Ludemans decision by politics and economics

combat a problem of late night vandalism. The refurbishment includes the fitting of a lockable door to the upper saloon - enabling it to be isolated on the late night services.

And the seats to the rear upper saloon are being replaced with vandal-resistant fibre glass ones in day-glo yellow. Other seats are being retrimmed as required.

Quite apart from economic considerations, one great advantage of refurbishment appears to be its inherent flexibility - and its capability of fulfilling the long-standing requirements of individual operators.



London General's Nationals get new engines and transmissions

REFURBISHMENT - WHO DOES WHAT

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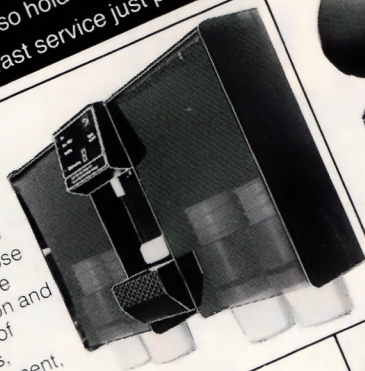
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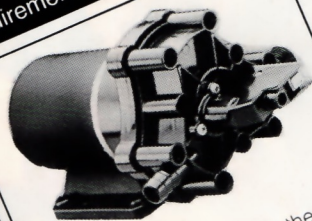
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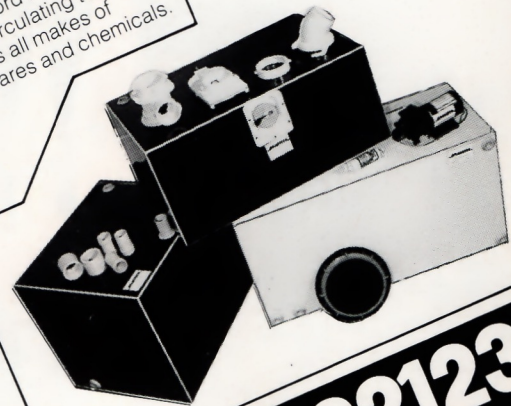


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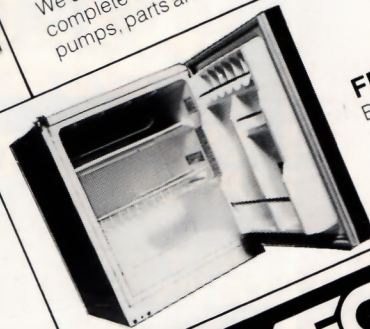
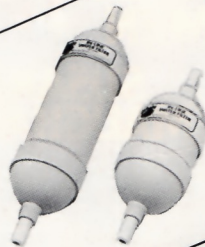
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Peter Dean

OH yes it is! Sorry to hurry things along but now is the time to start making plans for securing a chunk of the lucrative Christmas coach trade.

Christmas cards have been in the shops for weeks and, although you may groan and say, "It seems to come round earlier each year," there is no disguising the fact that now is the time to see what is on offer in the world of pantomime.

These shows may be corny but they continue to draw the families year after year.

Today's child needs something more exciting if he or she is to be dragged away from the computer game. As a result, some theatres go for spectacular family shows or try to book a West End smash hit for the season.

However, there are still plenty of pantos around. Here is a selective guide to productions that should appeal to all family coach groups.

In central London, the **London**

Showtime for the family favourites

Our damp summer will soon limp into memory and thoughts turn to the Christmas pantomime. **WILLIAM GOLDEN** raises the curtain on this season's offerings and finds out if this traditional entertainment still draws the crowds

Palladium is banking on the runaway success of *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (see separate story).

But the traditional fun goes on at the **Wimbledon Theatre** where that comic duo Little and Large will lead the laughter parade in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. It opens on Thursday, December 16, and runs until Sunday, January 31.

Also in the cast are Stefan Dennis, Vicki Michelle and Kevin Lloyd, who is better known as Detective Tosh Lines from the ITV series *The Bill*. For ticket prices and group reductions, call the box office on 081 540 0362.

If you want a night out with a difference, head for **London's Olympia** for the best in showjumping from December 16 to 20.

Highlights include the Mince Pie Puissance, when riders will attempt to jump the Big Red Wall, and the Volvo World Cup Preliminary Round when the top names in showjumping will compete for points to qualify for the 1994 World Cup Final in Holland.

On the fun side, there will be gun displays, games and the flying Csikos Riders from Hungary.

If you fancy watching in style, why not hire a private box? The boxes hold from 12 to 48 people



Les Dennis

and cost £26 a head. For an additional cost, you can enjoy a full cream tea or a Christmas lunch.

To reserve a box, call Tabitha Meakin on 071 370 8189. Supply is limited and boxes will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Another West End smash is coming to the **Manchester Opera House** when *The Phantom Of The Opera* opens on October 19 and runs through to April 2, 1994.

This Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is still a runaway success in London. To book, call the Phantom Hotline on 061 242 2501.

Over at the **Palace Theatre**, you will be assured of a tattifilarious time when Ken Dodd stars in *Dick Whittington*, which opens on December 10 and runs to February 6.

Also in the cast are the Diddy Men, Glyn Owen, who starred in BBC's *Howard's Way*, and singer Susan Maughan.

Tickets cost from £6 to £13. Groups of 20 or more are entitled to £3 off for most performances after December 31. Groups of 50 or more are entitled to two free tickets for most performances after December 31. For all group inquiries and reservations, call 061 2236 9926 from 10am Monday to Friday.

Over at the **Davenport Theatre** in **Stockport**, Letitia Dean is taking a rest from playing Sharon in *East-Enders* to star in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which will run from December 7 to January 22.

Tickets for the panto, which also stars Freddie Garritty, the lead singer of the Sixties pop group Freddie and the Dreamers, cost from £8 to £10.50. Groups of 20 or more get £2 off all seats. Groups of

How operators sell tickets to ride

COACH operators have mixed reactions to the panto season. Leslie Bell, of Irvings Coaches in Carlisle, says they are an ideal opportunity to market trips to families. But he says it is best to visit theatres a few hours' drive away, so that parents need not worry about their children getting home late.

Down in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Stephen Gray, of Grays Coaches, thinks pantomimes are not as popular as they used to be.

"Pantos are getting quite hard to sell. Where we used to sell about 50 seats a couple of years ago, inquiries today are for groups of 30 to 35," says Mr Gray. "We have had more inquiries for Christmas

shows and spectacular productions like *Phantom of the Opera*."

This was echoed by a spokeswoman for Bennetts Coaches in Newbury, Berkshire. She said that two or three years ago there would be three departures for a production at weekends, whereas today the booking would be for one coach for the matinee and evening performances. The company runs trips to theatres at Bournemouth, Oxford and Wimbledon.

There was a more bullish response from Jennings coaches. Based in Bude, Cornwall, the company sells seats, mainly to senior citizens. The main trips are to the two theatres in Plymouth.

COACH TOURS AND EXCURSIONS

Lifting lid on London

If you want the lowdown on shows in the West End, then book a place at the Stage Fair which will be held at the National Theatre on Tuesday, October 5.

There will be three seminars to explain everything about the West End theatre scene. As well as

details of shows and how to arrange back-stage tours, the Metropolitan Police Coach Advisory Service will steer you through the minefield that is coach parking in central London.

For more details about Stage Fair, call 071 375 1561.

Family favourites

50 or more get the same discount, plus two free seats. For more details, call the box office on 061 483 3801 between 10am and 8pm

Soap star Simone Robertson, alias Phoebe from Neighbours, is starring as *Aladdin* which opens at the **Tameside Hippodrome** in **Ashton under Lyne** on Christmas Eve and runs until January 22.

Also in the cast are Gordon Peters and the group Stutz Bear Cats. Call the booking office on 061 308 3223.

There will be another production of *Aladdin* at the **Sunderland Empire** from December 16 to January 10.

Heading the cast are Shadow from the ITV show *The Gladiators*, Peter Dean, who was Pete Beale in *EastEnders*, and Tina Thomsen, alias Fin from *Home and Away*. Call the box office on 0783 514 2517.

The **City Varieties** in **Leeds** has soap stars Roger Walker from *Eldorado* and Ian Sharrock from *Emmerdale* in *Dick Whittington*. It runs from December 17 to January 15.

Call the box office on 0532 430808.

Down at the **Wyvern Theatre** in **Swindon**, tickets are from just £5.50 for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which runs from December 15 to January 22. There are further discounts for parties. Call 0793 524481 for details.

You should get your skates on and head for the **Brighton Centre** where *Carmen* and *Robin Hood* are the themes for *Holiday On Ice* from January 5 to 30, 1994. Concessions are available for this dance spectacular. Call

the box office on 0273 202881.

In **Southampton**, the all-singing, all-joking entertainer Brian Conley will team up with Gloria Hunniford in *Cinderella* at the **Mayflower**.

The panto will run from December 16 to February 6. Tickets cost from £5 to £11.50 for groups except for premium-priced performances which will be on December 18, December 21 to 23 and 26 to 30, and all Saturdays until February 5 (except Saturday, January 1). For group bookings call 0703 333001.

Further down the coast, Rolf Harris plays Simple Simon in *Jack and the Beanstalk* at the **Theatre Royal, Plymouth**.

He will be joined in the fun by Bonnie Langford, Carmen Silvera (Edith from 'Allo, 'Allo) and Dame Hilda Bracket. The panto runs from December 17 to February 5. For group sales, call 0752 260960.

The **Bristol Hippodrome** will not miss out on panto fun when Irish songbird Dana heads the cast in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Also in the cast is TV personality Andrew O'Connor. It runs from December 17 to January 23. Call 0272 299444.

Mark Eden, who was the villainous Alan Bradley in *Coronation Street*, leads the fun in the traditional family pantomime *Aladdin*, which is at the **Buxton Opera House** from December 16 to January 1. Call the box office on 0298 72190.

If you want an elegant treat, then the ballet *The Nutcracker* will be a must when it is staged at the **Birmingham Hippodrome** by the **Birmingham Royal Ballet**

Dream double just Amazing!

ONE of the big successes on the West End stage in the last 18 months has been the revival of the Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Joseph And His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. And this Christmas, there is double the fun when the London production leaves town for a season in the North West.

But fans in London and the South East will not miss out because *Joseph* will continue to be staged at the **London Palladium** over Christmas instead of the traditional pantomime.

And Aussie heart-throb Jason Donovan will take the lead. Jason is returning to the show on October 4 and will stay with the run until the middle of January. Tickets are like gold dust, but you can chance your luck by ringing group reservations on 071 494 5456. The **Palladium** is off Oxford Street.

If you are wondering what has happened to Phillip Schofield, he is taking the sea air and appearing in a production of *Joseph* at the **Blackpool Opera House**. This spectacular



Jason Donovan: Aussie heart-throb back in West End

opens on December 10 and runs until January 22. Groups of 30 or more qualify for a £2.50 reduction off all prices, so you will pay £18.50, £13.50, £10 or £7.

These prices are not available from December 20 to January 4, nor at weekends.

The arrival of *Joseph* is a considerable coup for the **Opera House** and a spokeswoman said that tickets were selling fast. For more information, call the box office on 0253 27786.

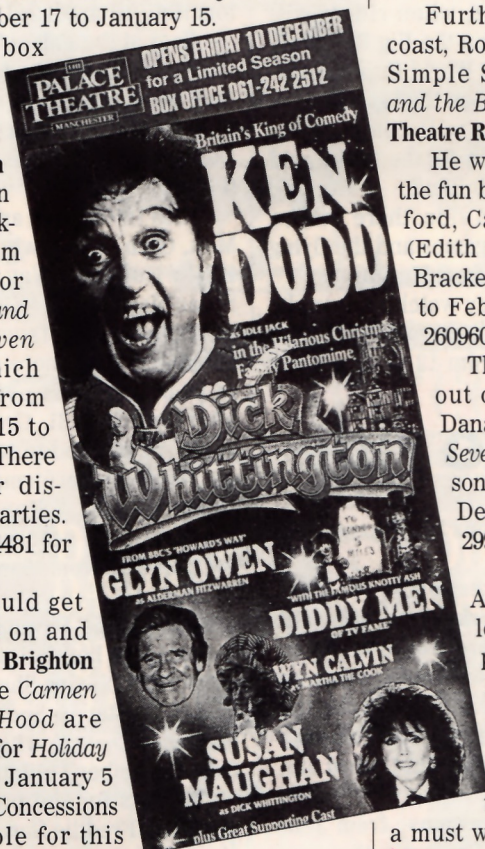
To get to the resort, travel along the M6 and take the M55 which leads directly to the town. There are ample coach parks.

from December 3 to 18. Groups of 20 or more get £8.50 off £29.50 tickets, £7.50 off £24.50 tickets, £6.50 off £20 tickets, and £5.50 off £16 tickets. Call the box office on 021 622 7486.

There will be two pantos for the price of one at the **Derngate** in **Northampton** when the lively Gary Wilmot leads the fun in *Robin Hood and Babes in the Wood*. It runs from December 19 to January 29. Call the box office on 0604 24811.

Television stars lead the fun in *Jack and the Beanstalk* at the **White Rock Theatre**, **Hastings**, from December 18 to January 8. Lucinda Cowden, from *Neighbours* and Michael Knowles, from *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*, should guarantee an entertaining night out. Call the box office on 0424 721210.

So encourage your passengers to pack the popcorn and the soft drinks and head for your nearest theatre and sit back and enjoy the fun as the curtain goes up on a great British tradition.



NEXT WEEK: Will the tills ring out at Christmas?

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A new post for palaces

HISTORICAL Royal Palaces has appointed its first travel trade sales manager to handle operators' inquiries, as part of a major new promotion programme. Jane Baker is responsible for promoting the changes at the Tower of London and managing the other royal palaces around London: Hampton Court, Kensington, Kew and Banqueting House at Whitehall.

She has opened travel trade offices to improve co-ordination with the tourist industry and improve relationships with operators. Jane Baker said: "The establishment of the office is the first step in providing the trade with the level of service it requires. I shall be visiting as many operators and travel organisations as I can in the next few months to update them on new developments."

Following recent efforts to identify problems that tour operators were encountering, lack of advance information was identified as a major criticism. Some operators had complained that vehicles had turned up at the tower when it was closed.

For further inquiries contact Jane Baker or Gwynneth Edwards at Historical Royal Palaces on 081 781 9826.

Historical trail

A RESPECTED new book which claims King Arthur originated from Shropshire has prompted the creation of an historical trail.

Early historical references to Arthur suggest that he was King of ancient Powys, which covered Shropshire and most of central Wales, following the Roman withdrawal from Britain.

The 138-mile trail gives a taste of the county's beautiful countryside. It begins in Shrewsbury and covers important archaeological sites such as the Oswestry hill forts and the Wroxeter excavations of the Roman City of Viroconium, thought to be the capital of Arthurian Britain.

For further information phone Lesley Davies on 0743 252269.

We're here to stay says EuroDisney

EURODISNEY has quelled speculation about closure of the resort in the winter.

EuroDisney chairman Philippe Bourguignon said: "There is no question over the long-term future of EuroDisney. The park is a success, it will remain open 365

days a year and we are confident that the financial issues will be resolved."

Earlier Michael Eisner, Walt Disney company chairman, confirmed support for EuroDisney. He said: "It is monumentally successful with the consumer." This

view is endorsed by Mr Bourguignon who said: "EuroDisney is now the most popular tourist destination in Europe."

More than 15 million people have visited the resort to date. The UK represents the second highest visitor group with over 15 per cent of the total attendance.

The recession-hit company is planning a financial restructuring package for spring 1994 and Mr Bourguignon remains confident that high levels of customer satisfaction provide the platform for improved performance.

Since opening, EuroDisney has added six new attractions and, to cater for the large summer crowds, the number of live shows and Disney character appearances have been doubled.



Boost for new P&O ferry

P&O EUROPEAN Ferries has invested £250,000 on its Portsmouth-Bilbao route which opened last April.

The 37,500 gt Pride of Bilbao has extended dining, entertainment and activity areas after a season of bookings exceeded expectations. A new hairdresser's and mini-gym are being opened and the conference and sun deck have been fitted with extra refreshment areas and new amenities such as satellite television and a tourist information

office. P&O press spokeswoman Sarah Richards said: "The growth in the self-drive market and the increase in people wishing to plan their own holidays in Spain and Southern France has encouraged bookings."

The Pride of Bilbao is the largest ferry ever to operate from the UK and can accommodate 600 cars and 2,500 passengers. The upgrade is also aimed at mini-cruise passengers who briefly go ashore before return sailing on the 28-hour run.

Museum featuring Biggles

HALF TERM at the Imperial War Museum has an exhibition devoted to Squadron-Leader James Bigglesworth, better known as Biggles. The exhibition is between October 23 and 31 and will feature a talk by Jenny Schofield, the biographer of the fighter pilot's author W E Johns. Historic first world war aircraft will be on display and Biggles himself will be on hand to explain how planes work and give children tips on what to do if you are attacked by enemy planes.

For further information contact Christopher Dowling on 071 416 5310.

Cockney festival planned

THANET Council's Leisure Coast tourism has organised the first ever Cockney Festival in Margate from September 24-26.

The three-day event will feature free musical entertainment in the High Street, a display of London Taxis, buses and vintage cars. Competitions include an attempt at the world's longest Lambeth Walk.

Local pubs promise sing songs and traditional East End entertainment. Sandcastle competitions are promised for children and Roy Hudd will be presenting the cockney festival show at the Winter Gardens.

For further information phone Christine Buffrey on 0843 225511.



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Menace of ticket touts

THE MENACE of ticket touting was the theme of the Society of West End Theatre's public forum this week. Representatives of the theatre and entertainments industries, the police, trading standards enforcers and legitimate ticket agencies were invited to attend the open meeting.

It follows a statement by Baroness Denton of the consumer affairs division of the DTi saying the division plans new legislation regarding ticket sales and inviting interested parties to air their views by 30 September.

The proposed law would require traders to tell consumers the face value of the ticket and the location of the seat. It would also compel the ticket agent to reveal whether the seat had restricted view or any other factor which could affect the customer's enjoyment. West End Theatre Society spokeswoman Susan Whiddington said: "The proposals are a step in the right direction for ending touting, but we believe the only real answer is to restrict tickets to licensed agencies."

See barrier in action

THERE'S an opportunity to see London's flood defence system in operation when the Thames Barrier temporarily closes on Sunday October 17. The barrier's massive steel gates which lie in concrete sills below the river bed are to be raised for the whole day to test the full effects of a high tide.

The Riverside Walkway on the south side of the river will have a live commentary broadcast through loudspeakers.

The visitors' centre contains educational videos, souvenirs and a buffet serving hot meals and snacks. Free coach parking is available but early booking is recommended.

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(35473/CWL)



New under-vehicle wash

A NEW automatic under-vehicle washing system has been launched by Smith Bros & Webb.

The Chassismaster is designed to be cheap and effective in operation, relying on high pressure cold water and detergent rather than steam.

It consists of an air-driven trolley, which runs on rails and has a pivoting spray arm with an oscillating head to provide full underbody coverage. The arm and head movement are controlled by air cylinders and dispense a 750 psi water spray at a rate of 20 gallons per minute.

Construction is robust, using self-lubricating bearings and seals designed to withstand pressures of up to 5,000 psi.

Operation is designed to be as simple as possible, with the vehicle been driven over the trolley track, and the vehicle length selected by the machine operator



Pivoting spray arm and oscillating head provide full underbody coverage

with the help of a graduated scale mounted on the floor.

The trolley washes down the floor area as it travels out to one of seven preselected lengths, clearing the track of all debris removed during the previous washing. The

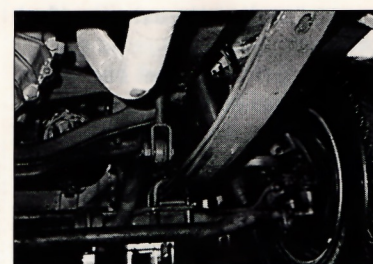
drum unit for the water and air hoses controls the cleaning speed, and pulls the trolley on its return run.

During the cleaning run, the high-pressure spray removes road dirt and accumulated grease from

the chassis and underbody. The standard cleaning time for a 12 metre vehicle is 40 minutes.

Installation of the machine requires three-phase electricity, mains water and drainage (water reclamation can be used) and compressed air. The installed cost is about £16,000. Cost of a single wash is between £2 and £2.50 without water reclamation.

Contact Smith Bros & Webb Ltd, Britannia House, Arden Forest Estate, Alcester, Warks B49 6EX, tel 0789 400096.



Grime is removed without steam

Book of many parts

HARWOOD Commercial has published a new Parts and Applications Catalogue.

Published in a loose-leaf format to aid updating, the catalogue has been created primarily for customers who know the parts that they require but are unsure of the parts numbers.

Makes and models covered include AEC, Bristol VRT, Daimler, DAF, Dennis, Dodge, Leyland Atlantean, Leopard, Lynx, National, Olympian, Tiger and Titan, MCW, Mercedes Benz, Scania and Volvo.

Each make and model is broken down into major groups including air suspension, body, electrics, engine, engine and

gearbox mountings, exhaust, front axle, transmission and rear axle.

These groups are then subdivided into product types. For example, front axle is split into braking, hub, steering and suspension.

Cross-references with existing part number information and product ranges with multiple applications such as shock absorbers are also included.

Sections covering individual makes are available separately.

To obtain your copy of the catalogue, contact Mark Seed in Lancaster on 0772 436464 or George Welsh in Scotland on 0475 633033.

Clean up

THE DANGERS of oil and grease on workshop floors presents an habitual problem to operators.

Tennant Maintenance Systems has recommended its 550D ride-on sweeper scrubber for a Greater Manchester Buses' 11,000 sq metre depot.

The diesel-powered scrubber is the largest in its class and can clean 9,500 sq metres an hour at a speed of 8km.

The 550D has dual scrubbing brushes and can hold 530 litres of cleaning solution.

For further information contact Mrs Pat Norrish, Tennant Maintenance System Ltd, 39 Central Avenue, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0QZ, tel 081 941 5585.

Volvo's single pricing move

VOLVO has initiated a new parts price parity scheme for UK-based and registered coaches needing emergency repairs in the major European countries.

A 10 per cent rule is applied to cut the price of parts. Given that all arrangements are made through Action Service Europe, the company's round the clock emergency roadside assistance service, the cost of genuine Volvo parts required to complete a repair will be adjusted such that the operator will be refunded the difference between what they pay and the UK list price plus 10 per cent - providing it is more than £25.

Sixteen countries are currently covered by the scheme and full details are available from any Volvo Trucks distributor or dealer in the UK.

Keeping the pressure on

TO AVOID the dangers associated with low tyre pressures on vehicles a new electronic monitoring system has been developed.

Mitchell Technical Systems has introduced Tyrewatch Mk2, an electronic sensor that replaces high pressure caps on valves.

It is linked to a cab mounted display which stores information on tyre pressure.

The system self-tests the tyres when the ignition is switched on and has its own batteries so it continues monitoring when the engine is turned off.

The Tyrewatch Mk2 is manu-

factured to BS5750 quality standards and comes with a three year warranty.

For further information contact Mitchell Technical Systems, Donington Park, Castle Donington, Derbyshire DE74 2RP, tel 0332 812661.

No action again

THE North Western traffic commissioner Martin Albu has decided not to take any disciplinary action against Manchester based Citibus Tours, in the light of continuing maintenance problems, in view of its takeover by the Lynton Travel Group.

Mr Albu said that the Citibus company had grown over the years "and at times exceeded their strengths."

The problem had been that Citibus had grown outside its financial and managerial capabilities.

Michael Waller, for Citibus, told a Manchester public inquiry that since the last maintenance investigation by DoT vehicle examiners in April, the situation had altered to a degree that would result in dramatic changes.

Managing director Martin

Wild said that he had been company secretary until Citibus was taken over by Lynton Travel in July.

The company had appeared at a public inquiry in 1989, following an unsatisfactory fleet inspection.

They had maintenance problems at the time as they were operating from an unsuitable centre. They acquired new premises and moved into them in October 1989. That required a large financial outlay.

The maintenance investigation carried out in April revealed problems in the maintenance system.

Over the years Citibus had acquired a number of vehicles from South Yorkshire Transport, with semi-automatic transmission.

Later vehicles acquired had fully automatic gearboxes. Those gearboxes gave them problems as they could not be worked on

by the company's fitters.

As a result a number of vehicles were off the road at the same time with gearbox problems.

Mr Wild said the company had also received a number of complaints regarding excessive black smoke.

When they pulled the vehicles concerned off the road to check them over, on many occasions they found they were not smoking as they had already been repaired.

Due to the two problems, gearboxes and smoke, the other vehicles were being stretched. Some vehicles were not being inspected as they were escaping the net altogether.

It was a question of finding a balance between maintenance and operating. Citibus had a peak requirement of 30 vehicles at the moment but that would soon increase to 40 as they had obtained a number of school



Graham Willett will keep pe

Every coach checked

ALL three coaches belonging to north Wales operator Leslie Hughes were given immediate prohibition notices because of their dangerous condition when spot checked by DoT vehicle examiners.

This was said when Mr Hughes, who trades as Lakeside Coaches, of Denbigh, appeared before the North Western traffic commissioner Martin Albu. The commissioner cut the authorisation on the licence from seven vehicles to six, and directed that it expire at the end of next February instead of in 1996.

DoT vehicle examiner David Aitken said the general condition of the buses was poor. There were no inspection records and there appeared to be no arrangements for periodic inspections. No driver defect reporting system was in operation. When the first coach was presented for clear-

ance, a further seven defects were found. Clearance of the prohibition on the second coach was also refused, again after a further seven defects were discovered. A second attempt at clearance failed because two of the defects had not been rectified satisfactorily. When the third coach was presented for clearance, a further five immediately dangerous items were found.

There had been no regular inspections for 15 months and the maintenance facilities had been allowed to deteriorate, said Mr Aitken. He concluded that Mr Hughes has no control over the maintenance of his vehicles.

Mr Hughes said that his operations manager, Adrian Kitchen, had been in total charge at the time, as he was involved with his hotel business. "Mr Kitchen ran the place. My only involvement was when a cash injection was required. I was a sleeping partner," he said. "I had no reason to suspect anything was wrong."

After he had been told Mr Kitchen had broken down in the office because of matrimonial problems, he had paid for him to go on holiday to Malta, said Mr Hughes. When the prohibition notices were issued in April, he had a meeting with Mr Kitchen. An extra mechanic was taken on and as far as he knew everything was put right.

When the vehicles were refused clearance he broke his holiday in Tangier, flying back immediately. Mr Kitchen stayed out of his way and he had not seen him since. "He probably did not want to see me and did a runner after I told him to put the coaches right and that I was on my way back from Tangier," said Mr Hughes.

He had had a mechanic in the yard for 25 years and "off his own bat" he put the coaches right. He was going to pack it in, but the staff had been loyal and that was why he wanted to carry on.

Mr Hughes said he had taken

on a personal assistant who now looked after all his other business interests. That enabled him to take charge of the yard. If he was allowed to continue he would update the fleet. He would get the business going again and then put in a competent transport manager. He now had the book that the vehicle examiners used so that they were on the "same wave length". All they were talking about was two minibuses and two 53 seaters.

Commenting on inspection records produced, Mr Albu said they did not identify the vehicle. They were photocopies of sheets that had not been properly completed. The sheets produced were not evidence of any inspection.

Mr Hughes said that the sheets produced were only intended as samples.

After Mr Albu had said all the entries in the drivers' defect report book were in the same handwriting, and appeared to have all

inst Citibus

**YOUR WEEKLY
REPORT ON
LAW AND THE COACH
AND BUS
OPERATOR
BY MICHAEL JEWELL**



Permanent watch on the situation

contracts, said Mr Wild.

Asked whether the the gearbox situation had been sorted out, he said that nine out of the 12 gearboxes concerned had been repaired and that problem was now behind them.

Graham Willett, a director of the Lynton Travel Group and managing director of County Bus & Coach, said that the latter company operated approximately 200 buses.

He personally had been in the industry for 21 years, and at one time was the assistant engineering supervisor of London Country Bus Services who had operated some 1,200 vehicles.

He was concerned when he first became aware of the situation at Citibus.

His chief engineer visited Citibus and made an appraisal.

The situation turned out not to be as bad as he had imagined. The facilities and premises were acceptable.

The problem was that the operation was under resourced as far as manpower was concerned.

The inspection periods of six weeks were too long and had since been reduced to four weeks.

An extra fitter had been employed.

The policy for acquiring vehicles had been changed. As a large company, they could acquire superior vehicles for the same price Citibus had been paying. "The fitters are getting on top of the jobs, rather than just chasing their tails", said Mr Willett. "Our systems eventually reduce engineering costs and provide reliable vehicles."

In reply to the commissioner, Mr Willett said that there was not to be any change of personnel. He was satisfied that the advice that Citibus had been given had been accepted and implemented.

The vehicles that Citibus op-

erated, giving the right engineering system, could be operated perfectly reliably.

Many of the defects were due to a lack of routine maintenance and follow up.

Essentially it had been a matter of things the fitters had not got round to doing.

There were systems but they were not working well. Mr Willett said that he would personally be keeping a permanent watch on the Citibus operation.

He accepted that money had to be put into the business but said that if they had not thought that it was a good investment they would not have acquired the company.

In the light of the input from Lynton, said Mr Albu, Citibus should be able to tackle the problems from the past and operate safely in the future.



prohibited from use

been entered at the same time, Mr Hughes said he had only had one driver since June, as he had only been doing a morris dancing contract.

The facilities at the depot were more than adequate, maintained Mr Hughes. He said that he proposed buying a new steam cleaner. Everything was at hand, and the fault had not been a lack of sufficient tools. Every time a vehicle had gone out on the contract it had been stopped.

For Mr Hughes, Andrew Grantham said there had been two incidents of vehicles being used by unauthorised drivers, and statements from the people concerned had been produced. He understood that one of them, a Mr Webb, was the holder of a PCV driving licence.

After Mr Albu commented that Mr Webb had said in his statement that he did not hold a licence, Mr Hughes said they had three Mr Webbs, two of whom held licences and one who did

not.

Mr Albu said that those matters had not yet gone to court and were therefore not relevant to his consideration.

After financial evidence was heard in private, Mr Hughes said that he was not arguing about the prohibition notices.

However, he had been unaware of the condition of the vehicles at the time. By employing a transport manager and two fitters he had thought he had made adequate arrangements for their maintenance. "It seemed to be alright, then all hell let loose when I was on holiday in Tangier," he said.

Mr Hughes said that Mr Kitchen had been in the habit of taking the inspection records home with him. He was aware that Mr Kitchen had been keeping records, as he had seen them.

Asked why he had failed to notify the commissioner of a conviction within 21 days, Mr Hughes said that he honestly had had no

knowledge of it.

After Mr Hughes had admitted that he was the nominated transport manager but had not signed the licence renewal application form in 1990, Mr Albu commented that that only made it worse. Mr Hughes conceded that he had not been carrying out his statutory duties as transport manager.

For the future, said Mr Hughes, he wanted to run two 53 seaters and four minibuses. He could get work for a lot more. He was an old established operator and well known in the Rhyl area. He agreed that the vehicles had not done much in the last few months, but maintained that he would have no trouble getting the work back.

He would be there himself until the business was making enough money again to employ a transport manager, though even then he would continue to oversee what was going on.

The mechanic had proved

that he could do it by getting all the vehicles through. The fitter's problem was getting it on paper. If he was not there, said Mr Hughes, Jean Williams, who had managed the business since Mr Kitchen's departure, would follow the fitter around and he would tell her what he was doing.

Mr Aitken said he felt the problem was that the fitter did not really know what he was looking for, and it might be better if the vehicles were inspected by a third party.

Mr Hughes said that in the past he had built his business up by buying old buses and lorries and acquiring properties. "I have got the properties now so perhaps it's the time to buy newer buses and lorries," he said.

Mr Grantham said he felt it was sensible to give Mr Hughes time to see if he could run the business properly.



COACH AND BUS CLASSIFIED

MARKETPLACE

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1981 BEDFORD YNT PLAXTON SUPREME IV, express, tested Nov 93, 53 seats, good condition. £7,500 + VAT ono. Tel: 0405 763440 (Goole). (38199/CS/BE)

BEDFORD YMT, 53 seats, Duple Dominant 2, 1980, full test, tidy condition. £5,450 + VAT. Tel: 0203 637171. (38119/CS/BE)

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1979 FORD PLAXTON, 53 seater, MoT, taxed, radio, good condition, engine needs attention. £1,950 + VAT. Tel: 0778 422365. (38111/CS/FO)

1976 DOMINANT, 53 seater, good condition, tested and taxed. £4,000 + VAT ono. Tel: 0592 82259 (day), 0592 759828 (eve). (38307/CS/FO)

1979 R1114 PLAXTON, 53 seater, Bristol dome, tinted glass, power door, side lockers, twin fuel tanks, radio PA cassette, MoT Jan '94. £3,500 + VAT. Tel. 0902 763880. (38339/CS/FO)

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(38130/CS/LE)

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1983 TIGER 245 Hydracyclic Dominant IV Express (SBG front), 53 seats, Reg YPD 121Y. Ideal dual purpose coach. Test 25-5-94. £14,500 ono. 1977 (R) LEOPARD Plaxton Supreme, Mk IV front, 53 retrimmed seats, power door, very reluctant sale. Test 15-12-93 £7,750 ono. Richardson Travel Ltd (Sussex) 0730 813304. (38325/CS/LE)

1986 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLÉ 340, executive 49/46 seater. Brown moquette. Tested to May. Unusually clean. £35,000. Tel. Lancaster City Transport (0524) 582908. (38312/CS/LE)

LEYLAND



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Marshall Service Buses,
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(38305/CS/LE)

1974 LEYLAND Leopard Duple Dominant I, semi auto, 49 seater, MoT July '94. Tel. Vale of Llangollen Travel, 0978 810070/1/2. (38176/CS/LE)

1978 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPE II, power door, power steering, s.a. new moquette, 1990, 53 seats, choice of 2, MoT 11.11.93 & 9.8.94, £8,000 each ono. Tel: 081-853 3515. (38303/CS/LE)

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1974 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON, 53 seater, taxed & tested. £3,500 ono. Tel: 0226 287403. (38128/CS/LE)

1981 LEYLAND LEOPARD, PP, 49 reclining seats, Plaxton Supreme IV, power door, £9,000 + VAT. Tel: 0670 521500. (38247/CS/LE)

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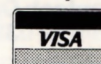
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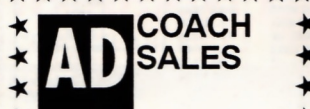
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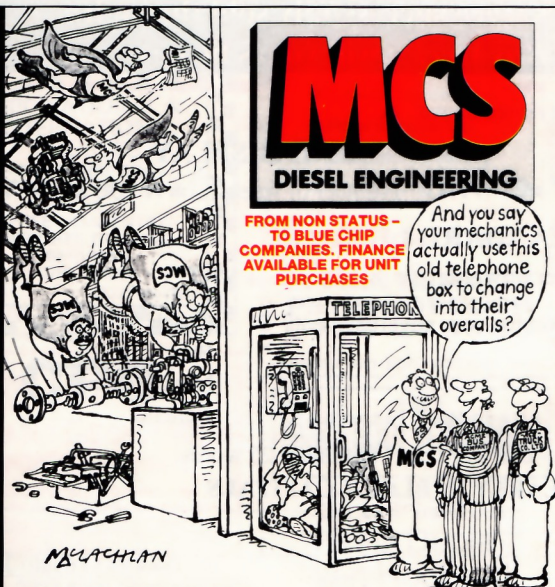
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Ford Iveco 79/14	£85	Volvo B58	£90
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TELEPHONE

MacFric Ltd - 0563 850924

FAX: 0563 850932

(29821/S/ES)

AUCTIONS



BUS AND COACH AUCTION

BELLE VUE - MANCHESTER

NEXT SALE

WEDNESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER

ENTRIES INVITED

Following the tremendous success of the last sale in July, we are now accepting and inviting entries (singles or multiples) for the above sale. So if your company has any surplus – PSV Minibuses, Service Buses, Welfare Buses or Touring and Executive Coaches – and would like to know more about our services, CONTACT:

STEVE HOLT OR DUNCAN WARD ON:
TEL: 061-230 6000 Fax: 061-220 8079

Belle Vue Auction Centre, Belle Vue, Manchester

PLEASE NOTE: *Early confirmation of intended entries is the most beneficial way of maximizing our national advertising programme for the above sale.*

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ADT Auctions /

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(35928/CDI)

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For further information

Ask for Melanie

HFA

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Roger Childs
 Lyndon House, 62 Hagley Road
 Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8PE
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Graham Carson
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 Telephone 071 603 1618

(35682/CONS)

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BUSINESS

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INTERESTING OPPORTUNITY. Partner required for commercial coach company. Must be enthusiastic and willing to work as hard as owner. Holder of PSV essential. Apply in writing to Box No. 38138, Coach & Bus Week, EMAP Response Publishing, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS. (38138/U)

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Due to Company closure, LCT offer for sale 1993 version OmniBASE/OmniTIMES software scheduling package for only £2,000 + VAT

Contact

Robert Morpeth

Telephone: (0524) 582606 (38311/UN/SC)

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(29705/UN/WA)

HELP! required urgently. Plastic bumper centre mouldings to suit Harrington Grenadier, also aluminium bumper end stops. Or information on any other Grenadier parts. Tel. 0622 757101, any time. (38332/UN/WA)

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CPC Holder
National and International

available for coach work. Also full PSV, so available to drive.

Full time considered

Tel: 0705 612035

or 0705 785782

(38251/UN/WW)

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(38320/UN/M)

JOHN DERWENT
POWER

Do you know the whereabouts of this coach driver?

He lived and worked in Manchester in 1991/92.

Previously he worked in the south of England, possibly for Gatwick Coaches.

If you employ this man or have had any contact with him since 1992 would you please telephone 061 789 0939

(38198/UN/MISC)

APPOINTMENTS AND TENDERS

AREA MANAGING DIRECTOR

£40,000 package

An exceptional opportunity has arisen for an experienced professional from the Bus Industry to be instrumental in the creation and management of one of West Midlands Travels area companies.

The Company is reorganising its bus operations on an area basis and, fundamental to the continued success of its business, is seeking a Managing Director for its South Birmingham Area, which has a turnover of £20m, employing 600 staff. The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate an impressive record of achievement in the Bus industry and hold appropriate management qualifications. Dynamic leadership with proven experience in managing people, finance and industrial relations negotiations are essential criteria, together with outstanding communications skills and strong strategic planning and development ability. Reporting to the Board of Directors your entrepreneurial flair, independence of mind and sound commercial acumen will be apparent.

The rewards are excellent and include, in addition to salary, share options, fully expensed quality car and performance bonus.

Interested? Then write to our consultant, Gerry Sarson, in total confidence with full C.V. at

GSE Executive Search & Selection, The Manor, Haseley Business Centre, Warwick CV35 7LS

West Midlands Travel

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BADGERLINE

VACANCY - TRAFFIC ASSISTANT (Bath)

Badgerline Ltd have a vacancy at their Regional Office in Bath Bus Station for a Traffic Assistant.

This position will involve bus and driver scheduling, public relations, Company promotion, liaison with local authorities, passenger research and related tasks.

Previous experience and an interest in transport preferred.

The successful candidate must show adaptability, willingness to learn, commitment, communication skills and some familiarity with Computers and keyboards will help.

Full training will be given and long term career prospects are excellent.

Salary negotiable according to age and experience.

Apply in own handwriting with full CV, under Private Cover, to: A.C. FIELD, DEVELOPMENT AND SALES OFFICER, BADGERLINE LTD, BUS STATION, MANVERS STREET, BATH BA1 1JJ.

Closing date is Friday 8th October 1993. (38257/A/A)

SHIFT SUPERVISOR

Thamesdown Transport, Swindon's Bus & Coach Company is looking for a Shift Supervisor who will have individual responsibilities on a late shift system.

The successful applicant will be required to ensure that a P.V.R. from 120 vehicles is made available for service within budgetary restraints and also undertake commercial activities on behalf of the company.

The ability to control, motivate and organise staff is essential and applicants must demonstrate effective job performance in a supervisory role and have a flexible approach to the demands of this key position.

Consideration will be given to candidates with relevant experience gained from within the Bus industry. A P.C.V. licence is required plus a L.G.V. licence for recovery work, although in the right circumstances, full training will be provided.

The salary offered will reflect the successful applicant's responsibilities and career experience to date. In the first instance, please send a detailed and current C.V. to:-

N. Babcock, Engineering Manager, Thamesdown Transport Ltd., Corporation Street, Swindon, Wilts SN1 1DS. Tel: 0793 615266

(38125/A/A)

An equal opportunities employer. We welcome applicants irrespective of race, sex or disability.

Thamesdown

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APPOINTMENTS AND TENDERS

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CROSS-CHANNEL HISTORY.

Le Shuttle, the car and coach transport system operated by Eurotunnel, is looking to appoint a coach operator to provide a scheduled coach service for foot passengers between Kent and the Nord Pas de Calais regions.

The service will operate in both England and France, so preference will be given to companies with local knowledge and facilities in both countries, or to British and French companies prepared to organise a joint venture.

The service will operate 364 days a year, the quality of service reflecting the prestige of the product. Full specifications will be provided to all applicants who are invited to tender.

It is envisaged that all administration, reservations and local marketing will be the responsibility of the appointed operator.

Operators who are interested in being considered for this exciting contract should apply for a pre-qualifying questionnaire by 1st October 1993.

Please write to: Charles Buchanan, Eurotunnel plc, Victoria Plaza, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0ST.

Le Shuttle is a
trademark of Eurotunnel
Le Shuttle est une marque
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INVITATION TO TENDER FOR LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN WEST YORKSHIRE

The West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive pursuant to Section 89 of the Transport Act 1985 will be considering the renewal of tenders for services in West Yorkshire particularly the following areas.

BRADFORD.
LEEDS.

CALDERDALE.
WAKEFIELD.

KIRKLEES.

First tenders will be issued in September/October 1993.
Services will start February to October 1994.

Operators who wish to receive more information and tender documents should write to:-

WEST YORKSHIRE P.T.E. TENDERING OFFICE
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET,
LEEDS LS1 2DE



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We possess an excellent reputation for building quality products to a high standard and have embarked on a major expansion programme to meet forthcoming demand for our products.

As part of our expansion programme we are now looking to recruit an Area Sales Manager to promote the company's range of products in the South of England.

The successful candidate will preferably have experience within the P.S.V. industry at sales and contracts level, be self motivated and have the ability to deal with clients at a senior level.

This is a new position within a rapidly expanding company and an excellent remuneration package will be offered to the successful candidate.

Please write, in confidence, enclosing C.V. to:
Mr L R Murray,
Northern Counties,
Enfield Street,
Wigan WN5 8DY.

(38133/A&TP)

Top posts in ICI training

ICI Autocolor has confirmed two senior training appointments in preparation for a major expansion in the numbers completing ICI Autocolor training courses.

Bill Savage (right) has been appointed European training manager and will be responsible for all European training activity including the training centre recently opened in Spain. Andrew Cullen becomes UK training manager - a post he takes on as construction of ICI Autocolor's new training centre in Slough gets under way.



Kirsopp for CMS

STAGECOACH subsidiary Cumberland Motor Services has a new chief engineer. David Kirsopp, 39, is based at the company's Whitehaven headquarters, where he is responsible for a fleet of 292 buses and coaches operating from depots in Kendal, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle and Workington.

Mr Kirsopp joins the company from Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport. He started in the industry as an apprentice fitter and worked with Grimsby-Cleethorpes for the



David Kirsopp

last 18 years, most recently as fleet engineer and then engineering director.

Savage is EP Morris' computer auditor

INDEPENDENT internal auditors EP Morris & Co has appointed David Savage to the newly-created post of computer auditor. His role with the company will enhance the information technology support and consultancy service provided to the road passenger transport executive.

Mr Savage has 30 years bus company experience, 22 years of which have been IT orientated. EP Morris & Co's managing director, Edward Morris, said: "The role of the specialist computer person at bus companies has been reduced to such an extent that in a large number of instances the

position can no longer be justified as a full-time appointment. Increasingly we are requested to provide this function on a contracted basis. David's experience and skills will provide the necessary control and expertise in this important area of our business activities."

Obituary

NORMAN Duggleby 61, who took early retirement from Hull-based Cherrys Coaches in March, has died after a short illness. Mr Duggleby was general manager of the 30-vehicle operation, which is one of several coach companies owned and run by EYMS.

COACH AND BUS WEEK

RECEIVE YOUR PERSONAL COPY FOR AS LITTLE AS 70P PER WEEK

I WISH TO SUBSCRIBE TO COACH AND BUS WEEK

Name: Job Title:
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YOUR COMPANY DETAILS (please tick as appropriate)

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|-------|------|-----|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Total no of employees _____ | 3. Fleet Size (please specify)
Bus _____
Coach _____
Other _____ | 5. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation / purchase and / or specification of the following (Tick all that apply) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. What is your company's main business function?
Bus Operator <input type="checkbox"/>
Coach Operator <input type="checkbox"/>
Local Government <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____ | 4. What is your primary job function?
Owner / Director <input type="checkbox"/>
Senior / General Manager <input type="checkbox"/>
Engineering / Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____ | <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Purch</td> <td>Spec</td> <td>Rec</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parts / Spares</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oil / Fuel</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tyres</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown / Recovery</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance / Finance</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fuel cards</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Training</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | | Purch | Spec | Rec | Parts / Spares | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Oil / Fuel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tyres | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Breakdown / Recovery | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Insurance / Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fuel cards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Training | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Purch | Spec | Rec | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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